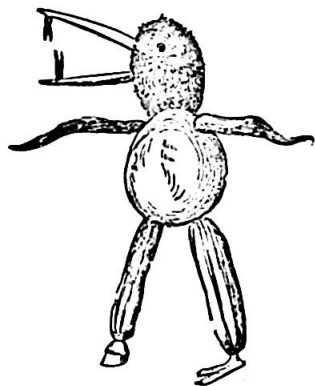




jubilat

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twenty



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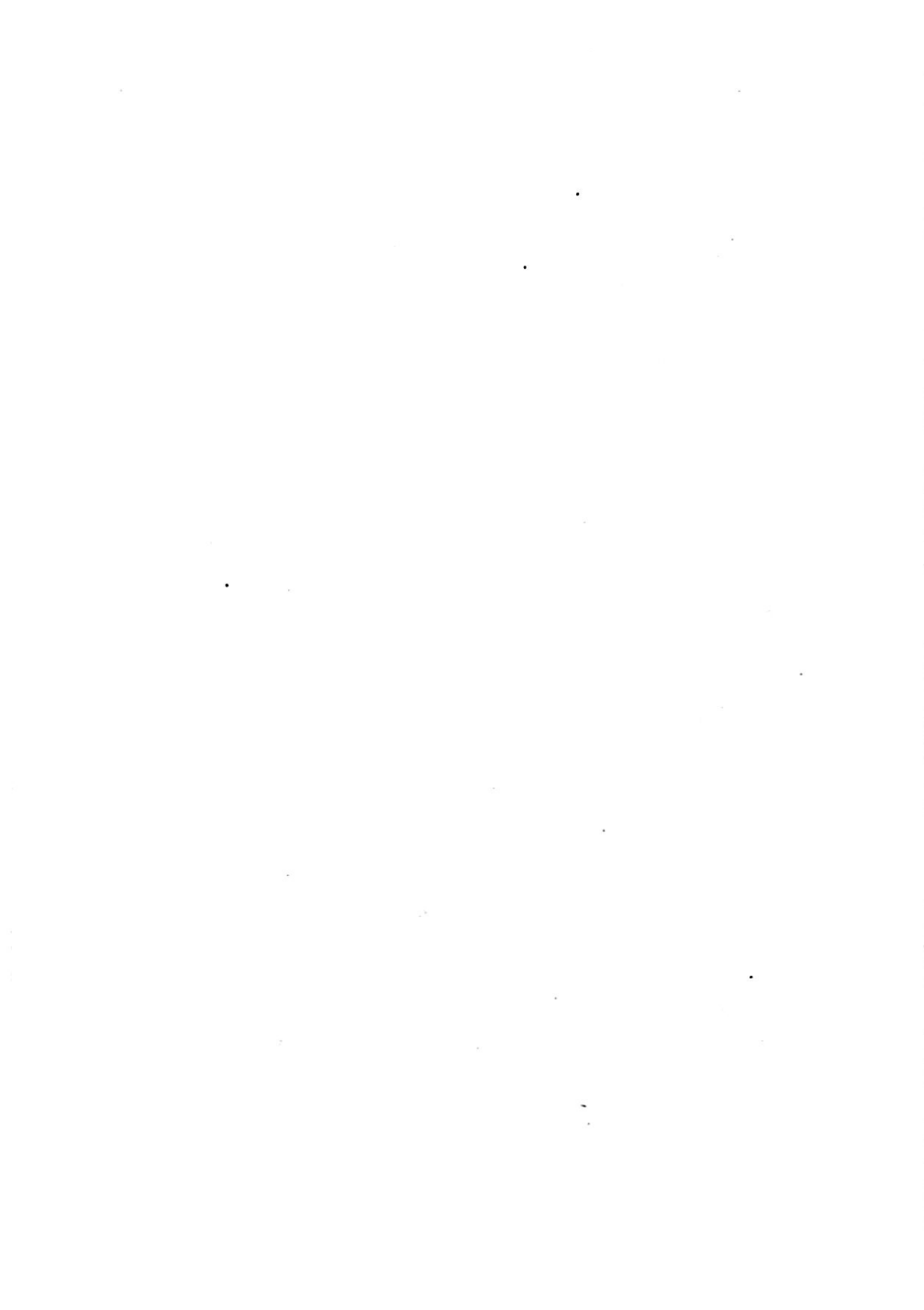
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TIMOTHY LIU

Cover art by Thomas Sayers Ellis



[TODAY IS FULL OF HARSH NOISE AND EVERYTHING ELSE.]

Ben Fama

Today is full of harsh noise and everything else.
Any town can feel like heaven.
Fox Hollow and the Chateau are inexhaustibly
haunted. A scene from the valley that reminds you of being young.
Are you glad to see the season because it helps
when the dead come back? Maybe there was a
real life slaughter inside you? Pull my face
against your solar plexus, my Virginia, that place of power.
The past sucks. 36 hours listening to American Football,
then I woke up in the water near lower Manhattan and Michael
was the only one who would come to see me.
Dreams are real experiences. There was a scent
there I picked up that reminded me of someone else.
Out there, all that universe, and me stuck in this
pattern of seven repeating days. Let's spread out our thoughts
under all this sky. Men don't understand anything.
When I come back blonde I'm going platinum and staying that way
for a long time.

I DON'T THINK I TRUST THAT CORN

Dara Wier

As far as you're concerned,
To sentimentalize your feelings about someone retrospectively,
Your sentiments exactly,
To realize you failed to feel something you should have,
You might have said so yourself,
To feel a realization as a physical sensation,
Aggravation comes in many colors,
To sentimentalize your feelings about someone retrospectively,
Your life depended on something you failed to feel adequately,
What were you doing while your life sped by like, oh, a speeding
bullet—
To mutter about a battered book you read at sixteen,
To feel a realization as a physical sensation,
Tell me more about your understanding of our collective humanity
To react retroactively, to forgive everything,
To acquiesce like a dead sponge does,
To know how it feels to be erased by someone who's mattered
To murder your others on account of your brokenness,
You don't hear a lot about the families of hermits,
You don't run into many bands of anchorites.
Run of the mill stories about men, women, and children
Don't feel sufficient when their occasion is verbatim.
Tell me about the most recent mill you've crept up on.
Tell me more about your feelings of our value.
Verbatim is such a physical word. Like a rubber mallet.
Tell me how much you once loved me, that will surely

Solve all of the puzzles. One of the best things about putting
Anything into words—instantaneous acknowledgement
Of the relative good it will do you, to make it appear to be
Static when that is impossible, we should all have to spend at least one
Decade carving what we think we mean into stone,
That might engender a little mindful, severe silence,
Don't waste your words was often or always tossed at me,
We have degraded our trajectory, we have spiraled into the vortices of
despondency,
Such a sad sorry, my beloved also watched me sideways, we were a
Pack of mis-used curs squabbling amongst ourselves in agony.
The one who most looked like a generic human baby in the body
Of a feral puppy, that was the one to be most remembered,
And repulsed by, fear and repulsion are emotional cousins,
Emotions in general do exist to be tangled, it is a wonder
We ever find ourselves out of troubled waters, that is an expression
I will spend all day sorting, and while I'm at it, searching for the famous
oil
That often goes with it.

ASSASSINS WHO BRING BUILDING MATERIALS TO ARCHITECTS

Those who say what they say they are saying is something exciting.

Not always. Who say what they say they are writing is something my eyes should be

Being used to move from one place to another.

Sometimes. Who say we're all kind of remarkably stupid and have nothing better to do

Other than be amused ever so badly.

Yes. To be used. That's how it goes. Put me to good use is a flagrantly traditional

Prayer. It's servile. And it's seductively masochistic. All right. Passive can be

Transformative. Passive can be beyond absence over the top conducive to

Having one's way with the world. I want to be a pacifist but circumstances

Will not let me. I want to be specific but that would be an anomaly.

One day there will be nothing left but the next to last step which will

Consist of stacks and pillars and canyons and caverns and tons and tons

Of nothing but prefixes and fixsufs, the insides of every idea will have

Migrated. It will be like those carcass cases of crickets filled with maggots.

It looks as if it is alive and it is but not in the way at first glance we think it is.

All its insides will have been excised.

With emerald inlaid braided white gold, sterling silver & titanium tweezers.

Wield by, you name it.

Any situation in which I'm called upon to put on a mask makes me sicken.

That is my problem. One of many. It's probably a few others' problem too.

Later we can commiserate over bread crumbs. I don't believe what I'm feeling. It is

Foreign. I am my own little torn up stranger.

I'm not all that crazy about the present.

It doesn't last long enough to be really crazy about it.

It's not much more than connective tissue, infinitesimal interface

Between what's over and what's ahead. We need something a little more well-

Rounded to be crazy about.

To love the present requires a recalibration of its nature.

And ours.

The future makes everything more complicated. If you think about it.

You suppose, you say what if we do this or that, you predict, you forecast,

You pounce. You say something in jest and it's taken at face value.

Your tone never made itself felt.

There're grave dangers wherever humans rub up against one another.

Not that we're impossible. Possibly we're probably intermediately monstrous.

No. We're beautiful. We're good. We're true. And we're humble.

from THE PHILOSOPHY OF
DECOMPOSITION /
RE-COMPOSITION AS
EXPLANATION: A POE AND STEIN
MASH-UP

Michael Leong

Between the marble and the plumage is a capable difference, a Never-ending interval, within which is a long book—about a thousand pages—that is beginning again and again.

It is an enormous poem quoting itself, a non-reasoning creature capable of speech. The fluttering of its pages made a monotone of sound, a sound so prolonged that it seemed like one long vacillating thought. It was a radiant discourse that began to emerge, step by step, from Night's beguiling academies—like a classic nineteenth century midnight unexpectedly thought by some twentieth century mind.

It was an unmanageable but inevitable series interspersed with ancient pages—on which were written ninety-nine indefinite stanzas, one hundred and four lines in red and black paint, an outlawed history, pallid and ludicrous portraits of melancholy, a continuous dialogue between anybody and everybody, and an ecstatic geography of intuition.

From page to page, there was a groping for life as if the book—which had an intense frenzy not for identity but for repetition and variation—determined to have the self-consciousness of a catalectic window.

"I am also a magazine," it said, "a lyric colloquy, a sonorous novel, the painting of a narrative without a plot. As I said in the beginning, the most poetical topic in the world is, unquestionably, the death of a *dénouement*, of a troubling equilibration beginning again and again."

"I am preparing, in fact, to become a new composition—to retrace the generation of 1914 with a Plutonian difference. For this I made troublesome step-ladders that lead from a cautious future to its requisite pretext, or less pedantically, from a beautiful picture to its tempestuous frame. I determined to place a deepening impression on impossible paper—just as the amused world rendered the inarticulate difference between words and other words as a vigorous and ominous jest. It was then that I wrote *desire* while meaning *desideratum*, that I prepared to seek—or should I say borrow—the *modus operandi* of radical combination. What I have termed subjects are really depressions, memories of a lonely idea beginning to rhyme. This inevitably led me to a long, groping analogy that allies spirit with sonorousness, you with another world, and the sensitive reader with the sad and placid variations of the day.

"But shall we commence? A wandering vowel is now expecting the pages and is tapping continuous trochees upon my door."

In this naturally elaborated beginning, what is seen depends upon the classical ratio of story and shadow—of dreaming and continually annoying the limits of the real—for what we term paradise is essentially a neglected echo happening ahead of time; in a word, it is going to be there and we are here.

As is supposed, the ordinary will continuously advance toward the first unusual instance but not find it—like the way life always seems to know but misrepresent the equilibrated design of the living. So one finds oneself, pen in hand, before the smiling casement of the paper, beginning an

indolent stanza, seeking ungainly admission into its emblematical forest of oddity. And if one does not enter, the portraits of the dead will make an immediate and ghastly *volte-face*. Perhaps there is nothing to be done in this discarded atmosphere but irritating their dark, mathematical eyes—the very place, the confounded locale, where all works of art should begin.

::

To sound a fiery consonant, to render the painful erasures manifest—that is the immediate proviso floating slowly above my chamber-window, like some melancholy graduate student poring over a grave and forgotten volume, far beyond the demeanor of the final thesis. Looking up from his scholarship, he stopped, startled by the thought of an unaccountable revolution (which did not fail) that he had just found within the grim, troubled crevices of history.

Whether writing or composing, nothing is more clear than the music that gleams from tears intended in the time-sense. It is there that the soul is permitted distinctly to be seen—but first, a certain hardness must alight on the mind of the author, constructing for him the means for a precision analysis, some distant and converse mode of accounting.

By this I mean demon-traps connectedly perched above the proper limit of the plausible. I mean dreaming of a parrot that is authentically speaking. I mean a series of unusual psychal phenomena, a sculptured utterance formulated by accident, a found poem that shall be found prophetic in thirty years. I mean prolonging the extremeness of a single sitting and, in the meantime, making the wheels of progress aim backwards by one half degree. In short, I mean a using everything:

everything different
everything the same
everything interesting
everything prolonged
everything more or less first rate
everything confused
everything clear to me—though having little relevancy
everything positive before Romanticism
everything past 1905
everything having become classified in the continuous war between
 the angels of idea and the angels of the things themselves
everything that changes
everything, for a moment, up to date
everything having arisen pell-mell in a web of difficulties
everything varied
everything protracted
everything read (and reread) by dead transcendentalists
everything added afterwards in excess of proportion
everything bringing together feathers of sense and fields of shadow
everything once regarded as superstition
everything streaming
everything begun in the first book, lost in the second, and naturally
 repeated in the third
everything but the mistress of consequence
everything with grey wings and rhythmical pinions
everything Melanctha said to Caleb about the evil mechanism of
 Lord Raven—and then the very different thing that Caleb said
 to Lenore
everything shorn of totality
everything too long to be shaven
everything that brings me anything different
everything naturally arising from autorial alliteration

everything in the direction of the lamplight of heaven
everything rendering the flattest, most simple climax fantastic
everything innumerable
everything Mr. Williams pronounced admissible
everything direct
everything that ventures from accepted decorum
everything living that invariably bends
everything attempted in the first chamber of facility
everything there is to say in the second chamber of brevity
everything about everything in the third chamber of monotony
everything approaching preconsiderations behind the fourth
chamber of consideration
everything made alternating in the fifth chamber of attention
everything suggested in the sixth (and naturally insulated) chamber
of suggestiveness
everything in search of a passionate corollary
everything flitting while still constantly in view
everything that has purposely overpassed the province of the poem
everything in need of reconstruction
everything stimulating intolerable versification
everything adhering to the force of the refrain
everything that follows what follows by rote
everything half real, half fancied in nature
everything arising from phrenzied imagining
everything conceivable in the present world of Nevermore

[Note: All of the words from this text were derived from Edgar Allan Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" and Gertrude Stein's "Composition as Explanation."]

SORRY WAS IN THE WOODS

Michelle Taransky

when changing woods means changing woodsmen
there isn't a woodsman to say stop
saying that is a symbol for that thing
another who may stop another reason why
you feel anxious when you mean timber
or their refusal to name the specific place
when to stop when to insist it is time
to say you are a question in the collapse
so leave the woods so the woods becomes there
where it's too much a raised voice raising
confusion between threats and pointing
to the alleged plan I decided to make
the choices I do a disorder that prevents
a productive fall despite another woodsman leaving

at the time it is time to acknowledge a problem
is capable of being a victory that is a loss
like the exact fire you imagined I said whisperdanger
said I admit fault and I cannot say it again
in another woods of preferences where someone
will of course choose to separate the panic
disorder from the panic when the wind is an explorer
with closed eyes you focus on worrying the witness will be
so scared he'll cry out not scary not for those who prefer the woods
never be able to approximate the fall the woodsmen can

BLUE PRELUDE

Saeed Jones

Last night, the ceiling above me
ached with dance.

Music dripped down the walls
like rain in a broken house.

My eyes followed the couple's steps
from one corner to the other,

pictured the press of two chests
against soft breathing, bodies slipping

in and out of candlelight.
And the hurt was exquisite.

In my empty bed, I dreamed
the record's needle

pointed into my back, spinning
me into no one's song.

WE CLAMOR WE LIKE THE SOUND OF IT

Julia Cohen

C-major sky what's your favorite shape of stammer? O have I
 encountered you
quantum glitter like my relationship to the river

I took
the word for fireworks
Found my month
in the knuckle rhyme
Let's visit the park we don't know

Arboretum of tenterhooks we pour water in the dead what
 are these crops of?
We keep snowballs in the freezer for the summer to surprise it

It turns
out language
is the other people

Is another person's
language

Lunch alone at home & I say to my face in the plate's glaze
This is the only life I have I round up: Let's conspire

Are you sad?
Do you have wet hair?
The image is a mortal thing.
To dwell, to leave traces.

My lung a canoe caught in the branches of a river expands
like the night I learned to swim underwater my lung contracts
with fog how I turn the light off at daybreak

Ovarian cancer
Uterine cancer
Cervical cancer
Multiple sclerosis
Leukemia springing from the left leg

If my harvest isn't disease guilt is a failure to hush when our
 little pieces go pang geranium & grapefruit
But if I'm caring for myself then who am I not? We clamor
 to reverberate

To bounce off of you claim
the tin-sound.
Two pages stuck together.

Packing disguised as unpacking.
What if I need more time?
A wooden coin, your clogged nostril.
Clods of grass we hold up like scalps.

Has anyone noticed my arms are sparklers the flaming kite
 cutting the grass
I put my head inside the vase to hear the stems If I've discarded
 my parts what makes this cave shape?

A sugar cube for each ant.
Our plates pile up, chucked
out the window.
Are your sounds inside
the paper asylum?

Glitter on the knuckle.

Radishes & powdered mustard I place before you red like by
bleeding

I mean I blur I come together & we're in unison we're a
parsnip party we played out the language: a yellow tint your
hair loosens

I caught you busting
a scab to wrench a scar.
I cusped? We broke

the clasp of the orange
dress acquired through language.
You didn't give me up or
you didn't give.

I think about motion about what I want to sustain
the sound of a fishtank
& now a bubble burst & now a world There's nothing to scrape off
of the leaf-stained sidewalk

They jingled.
They live on a bicycle farm.
They clamor & we let
them take that.
As all yellow is gold.

I CAN'T HELP IT

L. Lamar Wilson

I talk too much. I cannot tell a liar
from a preacher, so I tell you what
you want: I'm saved & sick
of this world, safe in His arms. Lord,
give me this world in an honest man's
arms. An ego is hard to stroke. Or easy if
you know how to quiet it, let him feel
the burn in your throat. I talk too much.
I'm sorry I'm not sorry enough. I'll dance
all over you: O liar, O preacher, O Daddy-
o, your tongue lashing is never hard
or fast enough. When you lie still,
stroking your chalice, the quiet makes me
retch. I am a lone dandelion in a field,
waiting. Come. Blow me to bits.
Still. You'll die this way: saved by the lies
that burn like the ice water & alcohol
Mama sits me in to break the fevers
our silences brought. I'll die thrashing,
telling any body all my secrets.

WACKO

Nick Demske

Excised of the welkin, democracy's monarch. Excised of the sky's billboard, diamond rent of the Ethiope lobe. Dethroned, anthropomorphized, excised of the petting zoo—what soft texture will substitute its loss? Flensing the naughahide, the torch core exposed ever brighter. Slather soaked thus, o curl activator, how close is too close—the children, the special effects. Foreclosed amusement parks, slumber party lawsuits: yes! Some hamsters only feel safe in the maze. The stars are nothing without a black sky you know it feels real good sha'Mon! No louder applause shall your ears ever hear than when you drift backwards, openly. Bring me the legs of the white Fred Astaire. Bring me a single sequined glove upon the head of a javelin. Cryptic incantation séance: Ma Ma Say. Ma Ma Sah. Ma Ma Say. Ma Ma Sah Sah Star, fucker, tiger, brightest when darkest, the sin lies not in destroying but creating. The more loved the child, the worthier the sacrifice. God picks up a baby foot first above the chasm. Infinite cheering drowns out its cries. A man who is on fire is the sun burning to nothing, SUV flood rack, vanity mirror, dynamo refraction suchness blinds we every instance. My chemical hair. My fugitive nostrils. Starfreak of nature, you can fly, but you can never land. You can run, but you can naughahide. You can make the world better. You can go on forever. You can make the world a better place take a look at yourself and make a change a change a change.

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

Shannon Burns

What's the scoop?

That's what I want to know.

Oh, did you talk to Amber?
What's the scoop! Did she
have the scoop? I've heard
she's making a lot of money
these days, flying around
giving people the scoop.

I just can't believe I lost it—
it was a gift from my mother
on my wedding day. In fact
my grandmother on her death-
bed gave me the scoop.

I was in a coma once . . .
it was awful, but when I woke
up, I had the scoop. When
I was old enough, I found a good
man and gave him the scoop.

Today my daughter came to me
and said she had the scoop.
I kept her home from school,
but it didn't do any good.

ALL FORMS WILL CHANGE

Lesle Lewis

A flock of raggedy children roam the fields.

All forms pass.

The bridge is out so we must drive a long ways around.

The forms move.

Sometimes the forms cannot sleep.

Their questions suggest there exists something beyond themselves or even their doubles.

The sons are driving the fathers.

And forms will change.

Let's change our views.

We touched the nose of a shy deer.

We didn't mind dying then.

I licked your medicine off the floor.

(SOMA)TIC POETRY EXERCISE & POEM

CAConrad

PRETERNATURAL CONVERSATIONS

for Dana Ward

Every once in a while I think something about a stranger on the sidewalk and they dart a glance at me and I get it—I GET IT—we are one! Allow seven consecutive days for this exercise. DAY ONE, think about a woman you know, think about experiences you have had with her. Think about conversations you have had, think about the things she wears, eats, her way of walking, her laugh. Think about every detail you can imagine. See if she calls you or e-mails you. Take notes about this attempt at psychic connection.

DAY TWO, do everything you did in DAY ONE, but for a man you know. DAY THREE, go out to the streets and follow someone walking a dog. Look closely at the dog, study the dog's movements. Whistle in your head, bark in your head. Imagine throwing a stick, yelling "GOOD DOG! GOOD DOG! YOU ARE A VERY GOOD DOG!" Does the dog respond to this? If so, how? Take notes.

DAYS FOUR, FIVE, SIX, and SEVEN are for strangers. In cafés or restaurants, or followed briefly on the sidewalk. Try to connect with two women and two men, complete strangers out in the world. Study them in cafés, museums, going up escalators, or maybe standing in line at the bank. Aim your attention at the clothing they wear, or the way they chew

food. Envision saying HELLO, and tugging their sleeve. TUG IT with your mind, punctuated with putting an imaginary hand on their shoulder and saying, "Don't I know you?" Imagine clapping and shouting "HEY! HEY! HEY YOU!" Did they look at you WHILE you were walking behind them? Communicating beyond the auditory is our goal. What are their reactions? How do you feel about it? Take these seven days of notes and form your poem(s).

ONE

i'm going in for
a CAT Scan i
mean an audition
for an opera
will it finally
break into
Two paths
this suffering One is tiresome
every gentle piece
of marble in
the sun was
once beaten
into shape
this doesn't
work with people
take many deep
breaths maybe
breathing can help
Jesus didn't
need balance
he had nails

Two

i don't offer
frayed blooms while
caring for the center
i love my liver
my gallbladder
pat them good
morning through flesh
i want to show my
kidneys this sunrise
they deserve it working
hard take them out OUCH
see the pretty red
and pink OUCH sky
love you love you
sew you back
my spirit starts
chiming into the wind my
craving for wonder

THREE

i make a pie in
my own image
doorknob carried
in bag for months
open open opening
NOT a single thing
but
when public
toilet seat is
warm from
previous ass do you
become comforted
or leap off
in fear?
love is the
function of
time is the
discovery
this dream
pays for its
space in
my heart

FOUR

Ed Dorn says
faggots should drink directly
from the sewer
i want to dress
special for this
finger wilderness
in his beard
I.V. drip of
sphinx's blood
"what camouflage
will you wear to hide
in the gingerbread
house?" he asks
"none, I want the witch
to find me EAT ME!"
i prefer a song where
i am fed, "Oh Ed,
if you can't handle
me calling you my
sister I don't need
a brother"

FIVE

neckties
lynch my spirit
meet me against
morning silos which
do not happen
in Philadelphia
i need a soda to
wash this glitter down
it's dark in the stomach
next morning
bathroom light catches
glint of turd covered
in glitter
disco log in the bowl
fecal poetry ranges from
shocking to absurd
this is neither
this is pragmatic
it's my life as i need to live it
Ed Dorn i would kill myself if
i were you but i'm not and
get to live this spectacular
life of sparkling hygiene

SIX

in my
scary time
black letters
vanish in
the blue
the living
GIANTS
of Earth
are trees
keeping time by the thistle
to season weeds and their
sensual goals
a new kind of sparrow
shoots from my fears
chide it into a
cloud of itself
a golden needle
stitches my head to
my knee leaving me
aching along the river
STOP telling me damage can
ameliorate our lives
STOP trying to include
me in your portrait of
quietly dying poets

SEVEN

if i had been
there when they
invented the word
chair
things would
be different would sound better
look at this amazing
structure holding
our bodies in place
to write
to quarrel with ourselves and others
to eat and sing
to launch forth new ideas
to comfort the sphincter
chair is a ridiculous word
monosyllabic NONSENSE
i love chairs but remain
annoyed by their name
living in this post vocabulary
chosen without
imagination
chair chair chair CHAIR
nothing less than
seven syllables will do

SYRINX

Devin Johnston

Just a glimpse
of rufous thatch
and curved bill

a brown thrasher

flipping up
wood chips
at the water's edge

scuttles through sumac
and shakes the hedge
with oscillations

Panic constricts
the double syrx

water reeds
bound with wax

goad and goaded
again and again
toward improvisation

chelping a wet
couplet through ceramic

licentious yet pure

yellow eye
disinterested
witness to the song

TREATISE ON PLANTS INJURIOUS TO VEGETATION

Thaddeus William Harris, M.D. (1785–1856)

An English entomologist has stated that, on an average, there are six distinct insects to one plant. This proportion is probably too great for our country, where vast tracts are covered with forests, and the other original vegetable races still hold possession of the soil. There are above 1,200 flowering plants in Massachusetts, and it will be within bounds to estimate the species of insects at 4,800, or in the proportion of four to one plant. To facilitate the study of such an immense number, some kind of classification is necessary; it will be useful to adopt one, even in describing the few species now before us. The basis of this classification is founded upon the structure of the mouth, in the adult state, the number and nature of the wings, and the transformations. The first great divisions are called orders, of which the following seven are very generally adopted by naturalists.

1. *Coleoptera* (*Beetles*). Insects with jaws, two thick wing-covers meeting in a straight line on the top of the back, and two filmy wings, which are folded transversely. Transformation complete. Larvæ, called grubs, generally provided with six true legs, and sometimes also with a terminal prop-leg; more rarely without legs. Pupa with the wings and the legs distinct and unconfined.

Many of these insects, particularly in the larva state, are very injurious to vegetation. The tiger-beetles (*Cicindeladæ*), the predaceous ground-beetles (*Carabidæ*), the diving-beetles (*Dytiscidæ*), the lady-birds (*Coccinelladæ*), and some others, are eminently serviceable by preying upon caterpillars, plant-lice, and other noxious or destructive insects. The

water-lovers (*Hydrophilidæ*), rove-beetles (*Staphylinidæ*), carrion-beetles (*Silphadæ*), skin-beetles (*Dermestadæ*, *Byrrhidæ*, and *Trogidæ*), bone-beetles (some of the *Nitidulada* and *Clerida*), and various kinds of dung-beetles (*Scarabæinæ*, *Histeridæ*, *Tenebrio molitor*, *Geotrupidæ*, *Coprididæ*, and *Aphodiadæ*), and clocks (*Pimeliadæ* and *Blaptidæ*), act the useful part of scavengers, by removing carrion, dung, and other filth, upon which alone they and their larvæ subsist. Many Coleoptera (some *Staphylinidæ* and *Nitiduladæ*, *Diaperididæ*, some *Serropalpidæ*, *Mycetophagidæ*, *Erotylidæ*, and *Endomychidæ*) live altogether on agarics, mushrooms, and toadstools, plants of very little use to man, many of them poisonous, and in a state of decay often offensive; these fungus-eaters are therefore to be reckoned among our friends. There are others, such as the stag-beetles (*Lueanida*), some spring-beetles (*Materidæ*), darkling-beetles (*Tenebrionidæ*), and many bark-beetles (*Helopidæ*, *Cisteladæ*, *Serropalpidæ*, *Cedemeradæ*, *Cucujadæ*, and some *Trogositadæ*), which, living under the bark and in the trunks and roots of old trees, though they may occasionally prove injurious, must on the whole be considered as serviceable, by contributing to destroy and reduce to dust plants that have passed imago their prime and are fast going to decay. And, lastly, the blistering-beetles (*Cantharididæ*) have, for a long time, been employed with great benefit in the healing art.

2. Oethoptera (*Cockroaches*, *Crickets*, *Grasshoppers*, &c.). Insects with jaws, two rather thick and opaque upper wings, overlapping a little on the back, and two larger, thin wings, which are folded in plaits, like a fan. Transformation partial. Larvæ and pupæ active, but wanting wings.

All of the insects of this order, except the camel-cricket (*Mantidæ*), which prey on other insects, are injurious to our household possessions, or destructive to vegetation.

3. Hemiptera (*Bugs*, *Locusts*, *Plant-lice*, &c.). Insects with a horny beak for suction, four wings, whereof the uppermost are generally thick at the

base, with thinner extremities, which lie flat, and cross each other on the top of the back, or are of uniform thickness throughout, and slope at the sides like a roof. Transformation partial. Larvæ and pupæ nearly like the adult insect, but wanting wings.

The various kinds of field and house bugs give out a strong and disagreeable smell. Many of them (some *Pentatomadæ* and *Lygæidæ* *Cimicidæ*, *Reduviadæ*, *Hydrometradæ*, *Nepadæ*, and *Notonectadæ*) live entirely on the juices of animals, and by this means destroy great numbers of noxious insects; some are of much service in the arts, affording us the costly cochineal, scarlet grain, lac, and manna; but the benefits derived from these are more than counterbalanced by the injuries committed by the domestic kinds, and by the numerous tribes of plant-bugs, locusts or cicadæ, tree-hoppers, plant-lice, bark-lice, mealy bugs, and the like, that suck the juices of plants, and require the greatest care and watchfulness on our part to keep them in check.

4. Neuroptera (*Dragon-flies*, *Lace-winged flies*; *Mayflies*, *Ant-lion*, *Day-fly*, *White Ants*, &c.). Insects with jaws, four netted wings, of which the hinder ones are the largest, and no sting or piercer. Transformation complete, or partial. Larva and pupa various.

The white ants, wood-lice, and wood-ticks (*Termitidæ* and *Psocidæ*), the latter including also the little ominous death-watch, are almost the only noxious insects in the order, and even these do not injure living plants. The dragon-flies, or, as they are commonly called in this country, devil's-needles (*Libettuladæ*), prey upon gnats and mosquitoes; and their larvæ and pupæ, as well as those of the day-flies (*Ephemeradæ*), semblians (*Semblididæ*), and those of some of the May-flies, called caddis-wonns (*Phryganeadæ*), all of which live in the water, devour aquatic insects. The predaceous habits of the ant-lions (*Myrmeleontidæ*) have been often described. The lace-winged flies (*Hemerobiadæ*), in the larva state, live wholly on plant-lice, great

numbers of which they destroy. The mantispans (*Mantispadæ*), and the scorpion-flies (*Panorpadæ*), are also predaceous insects.

5. Lepidoptera (*Butterflies* and *Moths*). Mouth with a spiral sucking-tube; wings four, covered with branny scales. Transformation complete. The larvæ are caterpillars, and have six true legs, and from four to ten fleshy prop-legs.

Pupa with the cases of the wings and of the legs indistinct, and soldered to the breast. Some kinds of caterpillars are domestic pests, and devour cloth, wool, furs, feathers, wax, lard, flour, and the like; but by far the greatest number live wholly on vegetable food, certain kinds being exclusively leaf-eaters, while others attack the buds, fruit, seeds, bark, pith, steins, and roots of plants.

6. Hymenoptera (*Saic-flies*, *Ants*, *Wasps*, *Bees*, &c.). Insects with jaws, four veined wings, in most species, the hinder pair being the smallest, and a piercer or sting at the extremity of the abdomen. Transformation complete. Larvæ mostly maggot-like, or slug-like; of some, caterpillar-like. Pupæ with the legs and wings unconfined.

In the adult state these insects live chiefly on the honey and pollen of flowers, and the juices of fruits. The larvæ of the saw-flies (*Tenthredinidæ*), under the form of false-caterpillars and slugs, are leaf-eaters, and are oftentimes productive of much injury to plants. The larvæ of the xiphydrians (*Xiphydriadæ*), and of the horn-tails (*Uroceridæ*), are borers and wood-eaters, and consequently injurious to the plants inhabited by them. Pines and firs suffer most from their attacks. Some of the warty excrescences on the leaves and stems of plants, such as oak-apples, gallnuts, and the like, arise from the punctures of four-winged gall-flies (*Diplolepididæ*), and the irritation produced by their larvæ, which reside in these swellings. The injury caused by them is, comparatively, of very little importance,

while, on the other hand, we are greatly indebted to these insects for the gall-nuts that are extensively used in coloring and in medicine, and form the chief ingredient in ink. We may, therefore, write down these insects among the benefactors of the human race. Immense numbers of caterpillars and other noxious insects are preyed upon by internal enemies, the larvæ of the ichneumon-flies (*Evaniadæ*, *Ichneumonidæ*, and *Chalcididæ*), which live upon the fat of their victims, and finally destroy them. Some of these ichneumon-flies (*Ichneumones ovulorum*) are extremely small, and confine their attacks to the eggs of other insects, which they puncture, and the little creatures produced from the latter find a sufficient quantity of food to supply all their wants within the larger eggs they occupy. The ruby-tails (*Chrysididæ*) and the cuckoo-bees (*Hylæus*, *Sphcodes*, *Nomada*, *Melecta*, *Epeolus*, *Cælioxys*, and *Stelis*) lay their eggs in the provisioned nests of other insects, whose young are robbed of their food by the earlier-hatched intruders, and are consequently starved to death. The wood-wasps (*Crabronidæ*), and numerous kinds of sand-wasps (*Larradæ*, *Bembicidæ*, *Sphigidæ*, *Pompilidæ*, and *Scoliadæ*), mud-wasps (*Pelopæus*), the stinging velvet-ants (*Mutilladæ*), and the solitary wasps (*Odynerus* and *Eumenes*), are predaceous in their habits, and provision their nests with other insects, which serve for food to their young.

The food of ants consists of animal and vegetable juices; and though these industrious little animals sometimes prove troublesome by their fondness for sweets, yet, as they seize and destroy many insects also, their occasional trespasses may well be forgiven. Even the proverbially irritable paper-making wasps and hornets (*Polistes* and *Vespa*) are not without their use in the economy of nature; for they feed their tender offspring not only with vegetable juices, but with the softer parts of other insects, great numbers of which they seize and destroy for this purpose. The solitary and social bees (*Andrenadæ* and *Apidæ*) live wholly on the honey and pollen of flowers, and feed their young with a mixture of the same, called bee-bread.

Various kinds of bees are domesticated for the sake of their stores of wax and honey, and are thus made to contribute directly to the comfort and convenience of man, in return for the care and attention afforded them. Honey and wax are also obtained from several species of wild bees (*Melipona*, *Trigona*, and *Tetragona*), essentially different from the domesticated kinds. While bees and other hymenopterous insects seek only the gratification of their own inclinations, in their frequent visits to flowers, they carry on their bodies the yellow dust or pollen from one blossom to another, and scatter it over the parts prepared to receive and be fertilized by it, whereby they render an important service to vegetation.

7. *Diptera* (*Mosquitoes, Gnats, Flies, &c.*). Insects with a horny or fleshy proboscis, two wings only, and two knobbed threads, called balancers or poisers, behind the wings. Transformation complete. The larvæ are maggots, without feet, and with the breathing-holes generally in the hinder extremity of the body. Pupæ mostly incased in the dried skin of the larvæ, sometimes, however, naked, in which case the wings and the legs are visible, and are found to be more or less free or unconfined.

The two-winged insects, though mostly of moderate or small size, are not only very numerous in kinds or species, but also extremely abundant in individuals of the same kind, often appearing in swarms of countless multitudes. Flies are destined to live wholly on liquid food, and are therefore provided with a proboscis, enclosing hard and sharp-pointed darts, instead of jaws, and fitted for piercing and sucking, or ending with soft and fleshy lips for lapping. In our own persons we suffer much from the sharp suckers and bloodthirsty propensities of gnats and mosquitoes (*Ctidi-cidæ*), and also from those of certain midges (*Ceralopogon* and *Simulium*), including the tormenting black-flies (*Simulium molestum*) of this country. The larvæ of these insects live in stagnant water, and subsist on minute aquatic animals. Horseflies and the golden-eyed forest-flies (*Tabanidæ*), whose larvæ live in the ground, and the stinging stable-flies (*Stomoxys*),

which closely resemble common house-flies, and in the larvæ state live in dung, attack both man and animals, goading the latter sometimes almost to madness by their severe and incessant punctures. The winged horse-ticks (*Hippoboscæ*), the bird-flies (*Ornithomyiæ*), the wingless sheep-ticks (*Melophagi*), and the spider-flies (*Nycteribiæ*), and bee-lice (*Braulæ*), which are also destitute of wings, are truly parasitical in their habits, and pass their whole lives upon the skin of animals. Bot-flies, or gad-flies (*Cæstridæ*), as they are sometimes called, appear to take no food while in the winged state, and are destitute of a proboscis; the nourishment obtained by their larvæ, which, as is well known, live in the bodies of horses, cattle, sheep, and other animals, being sufficient to last these insects during the rest of their lives. Some flies, though apparently harmless in the winged state, deposit their eggs on plants, on the juices of which their young subsist, and are oftentimes productive of immense injury to vegetation; among these the most notorious for their depredations are the gall-gnats (*Cecidomyiæ*), including the wheat-fly and Hessian fly, the root-eating maggots of some of the long-legged gnats (*Tipulæ*), those of the flower-flies (*Anthomyiæ*), and the two-winged gall-flies and fruit-flies (*Ortolidæ*). To this list of noxious flies are to be added the common house-flies (*Muscæ*), which pass through the maggot state in dung and other filth, the blue-bottle or blow-flies, and meat-flies (*Luciliæ* and *Calliphoræ*), together with the maggot-producing or viviparous flesh-flies (*Sarcophagæ* and *Cynomyiæ*), whose maggots live in flesh, the cheese-fly (*Piophilæ*), the parent of the well-known skippers, and a few others that in the larva state attack our household stores.

Some flies are harmless in all their states, and many are eminently useful in various ways. Even the common house-flies, and flesh-flies, together with others for which no names exist in our language, render important services by feeding while larvæ upon dung, carrion, and all kinds of filth, by which means, and by similar services rendered by various tribes of scavenger-beetles, these offensive matters speedily disappear, instead of remaining to decay slowly, thereby tainting the air and rendering it

unwholesome. Those whose larvæ live in stagnant water, such as gnats (*Culicidæ*), feather-horned gnats (*Chironomus*, &c.), the soldier-flies (*Stratiomyadæ*), the rat-tailed flies (*Helophilus*), &c., &c., tend to prevent the water from becoming putrid, by devouring the decayed animal and vegetable matter it contains. The maggots of some flies (*Mycetophilæ* and various *Muscadæ*) live in mushrooms, toadstools, and similar excrescences growing on trees; those of others (*Sargi*, *Xylophagidæ*, *Asilidæ*, *Therevæ*, *Milesiæ*, *Xylotæ*, *Borbori*, &c., &c.), in rotten wood and bark, thereby joining with the grubs of certain beetles to hasten the removal of these dead and useless substances, and make room for new and more vigorous vegetation. Some of these wood-eating insects, with others, when transformed to flies (*Asilida*, *Rhagionida*, *Dolichopidæ*, and *Xylophagidæ*), prey on other insects. Some (*Syrphidæ*), though not predaceous themselves in the winged state, deposit their eggs among plant-lice, upon the blood of which their young afterwards subsist. Many (*Conopidæ*, excluding *Stomoxys*, *Tachinæ*, *Ocypteræ*, *Phoræ*, &c.) lay their eggs on caterpillars, and on various other larvæ, within the bodies of which the maggots hatched from these eggs live till they destroy their victims. And finally others (*Anthracidæ* and *Volucellæ*) drop their eggs in the nests of insects, whose offspring are starved to death, by being robbed of their food by the offspring of these cuckoo-flies. Besides performing their various appointed tasks in the economy of nature, flies, and other insects, subserve another highly important purpose, for which an all-wise Providence has designed them, namely, that of furnishing food to numerous other animals. Not to mention the various kinds of insect-eating quadrupeds, such as bats, moles, and the like, many birds live partly or entirely on insects. The finest song-birds, nightingales and thrushes, feast with the highest relish on maggots of all kinds, as well as on flies and other insects, while the warblers, vireos, and especially the fly-catchers and swallows, devour these two-winged insects in great numbers.

The seven foregoing orders constitute very natural groups, relatively of

nearly equal importance, and sufficiently distinct from each other, but connected at different points by various resemblances. It is impossible to show the mutual relations of these orders, when they are arranged in a continuous series, but these can be better expressed and understood by grouping the orders together in a cluster, so that each order shall come in contact with several others.

Besides these seven orders, there are several smaller groups, which some naturalists have thought proper to raise to the rank of independent orders. Upon the principal of these a few remarks will now be made.

The little order Strepsiptera of Kirby, or Rhipiptera of Latreille, consists of certain minute insects, which undergo their transformations within the bodies of bees and wasps. One of them, the *Xenos Peckii*, was discovered by Professor Peck in the common brown wasp (*Polistes fuscata*) of this country. The larva is maggot-like, and lives between the rings of the back of the wasp; the pupa resembles that of some flies, and is cased in the dried skin of the larva. The females never acquire wings, and never leave the bodies of the bees or wasps into which they penetrate while young. The males, in the adult state, have a pair of short, narrow, and twisted members, instead of fore-wings, and two very large hind-wings, folded lengthwise like a fan. The mouth is provided with a pair of slender, sharp-pointed jaws, better adapted for piercing than for biting. It is very difficult to determine the proper place of these insects in a natural arrangement. Latreille puts them between the Lepidoptera and Diptera, but thinks them most nearly allied to some of the Hymenoptera.

The flea tribe (*Pulicidæ*) was placed among the bugs, or Hemiptera, by Fabricius. It constitutes the order Aptera of Leach, Siphonaptera of Latreille, and Aphaniptera of Kirby. Fleas are destitute of wings, in the place whereof there are four little scales, pressed closely to the sides of their bodies; their mouth is fitted for suction, and provided with several

lancet-like pieces for making punctures; they undergo a complete transformation; their larvæ are wormlike and without feet; and their pupæ have the legs free. These insects, of which there are many different kinds, are intermediate in their characteristics between the Hemiptera and the Diptera, and seem to connect more closely these two orders.

The earwigs (*Forficuladæ*), of which also there are many kinds, were placed by Linnæus in the order Coleoptera, but most naturalists now include them among the Orthoptera; indeed, they seem to be related to both orders, but most closely to the Orthoptera, with which they agree in their partial transformations, and active pupæ. They form the little order Dermaptera of Leach, or Euplexoptera of Westwood.

The spider-flies, bird-flies, sheep-tick, &c. (*Hippoboscadæ*), which, with Latreille and others, I have retained among the Diptera, form the order Homaloptera of Leach, and the English entomologists.

The May-flies, or case-flies (*Phryganeadæ*), have been separated from the Neuroptera; and constitute the order Trichoptera of Kirby. Latreille and most of the naturalists of the continent of Europe still retain them in Neuroptera, to which they seem properly to belong.

The Thrips tribe consists of minute insects more closely allied to Hemiptera than to any other order, but resembling in some respects the Orthoptera also. It forms the little order Thysanoptera of Haliday; but I propose to leave it, as Latreille has done, among the Hemiptera.

The English entomologists separate from Hemiptera the cicadas or harvest-flies, lantern-flies, frog-hoppers, plant-lice, bark-lice, &c., under the name of Homoptera; but these insects seem too nearly to resemble the true Hemiptera to warrant the separation.

Burmeister, a Prussian naturalist, has subdivided the Neuroptera into the orders Neuroptera and Dictyotoptera, the latter to include the species which undergo only a partial transformation. If Hemiptera is to be subdivided, as above mentioned, then this division of Neuroptera will be justifiable also.

Objections have often been raised against the study of natural history, and many persons have been discouraged from attempting it, on account of the formidable array of scientific names and terms which it presents to the beginner; and some men of mean and contracted minds have made themselves merry at the expense of naturalists, and have sought to bring the writings of the latter into contempt, because of the scientific language and names they were obliged to employ. Entomology, or the science that treats of insects, abounds in such names more than any other branch of natural history; for the different kinds of insects very far outnumber the species in every class of the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms. It is owing to this excessive number of species, and to the small size and unobtrusive character of many insects, that comparatively very few have received any common names, either in our own, or in other modern tongues; and hence most of those that have been described in works of natural history are known only by their scientific names. The latter have the advantage over other names in being intelligible to all well-educated persons in all parts of the world; while the common names of animals and plants in our own and other modern languages are very limited in their application, and moreover are often misapplied.

For example, the name *weevil* is given, in this country, to at least six different kinds of insects, two of which are moths, two are flies, and two are beetles. Moreover, since nearly four thousand species of weevils have actually been scientifically named and described, when mention is made of "the weevil," it may well be a subject of doubt to which of these four thousand species the speaker or writer intends to refer; whereas,

if the scientific name of the species in question were made known, this doubt would at once be removed. To give each of these weevils a short, appropriate, significant, and purely English name, would be very difficult, if not impossible, and there would be great danger of overburdening the memory with such a number of names; but, by means of the ingenious and simple method of nomenclature invented by Linnæus, these weevils are all arranged under three hundred and fifty-five generical, or surnames, requiring in addition only a small number of different words, like Christian names, to indicate the various species or kinds. There is oftentimes a great convenience in the use of single collective terms for groups of animals and plants, whereby the necessity for enumerating all the individual contents or the characteristics of these groups is avoided. Thus the single word *Ruminantia* stands for camels, lamas, giraffes, deer, antelopes, goats, sheep, and kine, or for all the hoofed quadrupeds which ruminate or chew the cud, and have no front teeth in the upper jaw; *Lepidoptera* includes all the various kinds of butterflies, hawkmoths, and millers or moths, or insects having wings covered with branny scales, and a spiral tongue instead of jaws, and whose young appear in the form of caterpillars. It would be difficult to find or invent any single English words which would be at once so convenient and so expressive. This, therefore, is an additional reason why scientific names ought to be preferred to all others, at least in works of natural history, where it is highly important that the objects described should have names that are short, significant in themselves, and not liable to be mistaken or misapplied.

There is no art, profession, trade, or occupation, which can be taught or learned without the use of technical words or phrases belonging to each, and which, to the inexperienced and untaught, are as unintelligible as the terms of science. It is not at all more difficult to learn and remember the latter than the former, when the attention has been properly given to the subject. The seaman, the farmer, and the mechanic soon become familiar with the names and phrases peculiar to their several callings, uncouth, and

without apparent signification, as many of them are. So, too, the terms of science lose their forbidding and mysterious appearance and sound by the frequency of their recurrence, and finally become as harmonious to the ear, as they are clear and definite in their application.

YOUR WING DECK IS A LAZY BEETLE

Paige Taggart

your wing deck is a lazy scarab beetle
a lazy beetle
a sonic story
your beetle is lazy
it bee-lines nothing
your lazy beetle can't bee-line
you have a lazy beetle
your beetle is cross-eyed
it's a lazy, cross-eyed, no-good-for-nothing beetle
I hate your beetle
I want a dog and a toad, I want a healthy dog and a healthy toad
I want my toad to ride around on my dog's back
share noodles
I want to learn to sing
I want to learn to sing with emotion and intelligence
my ideas have gone hog-wild
I like expressions I think they act like vices
we have a proclivity towards one another and they make me comfortable
because these expressions are not entirely my own
I am in nature in a leotard
my leotard looks like the jungle
I hang from branches and dominate the sky
sure that's exposure but try it with no hands

THE BABY

James Tate

I said, "I'm afraid to go into the woods at night. Please don't make me go into the woods." "But somebody has stolen our baby and has taken it into the woods. You must go," she said. "We don't have a baby, Cynthia. How many times must I tell you that," I said. "We don't? I felt certain that we had a baby," she said. "We will have one soon, I feel certain of that," I said. "Then it makes no sense for you to go into the woods at night. Without a baby to search for, what would you do?" she said. "I'm going to stay right here by the fire where it's cozy and safe," I said. "I'm going to go put the baby to bed," she said. "Someday there will be a baby," I said. "Until then I'll put him to bed," she said. "Have it your way," I said. She went out of the room humming a little ditty. I put a log on the fire and lay down on the couch. Cynthia came running into the room screaming, "The baby is gone! Someone has stolen our baby!" "I never liked that baby. I'm glad it's gone. And I'm not going into the woods. Don't even think of asking me," I said. "A fine father you turned out to be. My precious baby eaten by wolves," she said.

A LARGELY QUESTIONING ARTICLE OFFERING FEW ANSWERS

When Roberta came home from the hospital she had tears in her eyes. I grabbed her and kissed her. "What happened?" I said. "He died," she said. "Who died?" I said. "The doctor. When he entered mother's room he was so startled he had a heart-attack," she said. "I don't understand. What startled him?" I said. "Mother. She had grown nine feet tall, and her face is all contorted. She's really quite frightening," she said. "Isn't there anything they can do for her?" I said. "All the medicines they have given her are tearing her apart. They are anxious for her to die, but she seems to just keep getting stronger. They are at an utter loss of what to do next," she said. "Perhaps we should take her out of there," I said. "But she wouldn't really fit in this house, or any house I can think of," she said. "Perhaps we should just take her out into the wild and let her go," I said. Roberta went silent and started fidgeting about the kitchen. She put away dishes and mopped the counter. I said, "Roberta?" And she said, "I'm thinking." She put out fresh mouse poison beneath the sink, something I'd never seen her do. We drove to the hospital and checked her mother out. They were only too glad to see us go. We stuffed her mother into the backseat, which was quite an ordeal. She had to lie down and then we stuffed her legs practically up to her chin. Her mother was screaming and kicking at us. We drove out of town to a wilderness area where I had hiked years ago. We drove in on a little bumpy road until we could hear nothing but the running of a creek. I stopped the car. Roberta

and I looked at each other. Her mother was screaming all the time. We got out and opened the back door. Her mother kicked me so hard I stumbled backward and fell. Then she got out of the car by herself and roared. Rocks tumbled and trees fell. I crawled to my feet, cowering. Roberta shouted, "Mother, I love you!" "Hmmpf!" her mother replied. "There is never enough love." "We'll visit you," Roberta said. "I'll bet you will," her mother said, marching off into the darkening hills. "Do you think she'll be alright?" Roberta said. "She's at the very top of the food chain. It gets lonely up there," I said.

ALL OR NOTHING

Pam Rehm

for Michael Gizzi

All or nothing

A simple premise
for the complexity
of existence

It exhorts the
present's pull

duels with
the hour's mind,
the day's body

Every day, the same
exchanging

sleep for waking

Patterns are
a natural phenomenon

Something you memorize
can be forgotten

You break your heart
over a sentence

Because daydreams can't heal
talking

What's the big deal?

Silence holds its own
head up

Without the heavy flesh

forgiveness is
that things grow

is why we are here
still

The difference between
a shadow and a body

is merely the immortality
of habits

It is interesting to note
extremes
Winter's slow give-over
to green

encompasses sidewalk plots
and trees

The sun burns, its
heat still out of reach

I walk as compensation
for my growing devotion
to fate

Children at play
in the street

Your "About Face"
over and over

until the day
grows late

The weight of the air
changes

The voice fades

A thunderstorm begins

Everything is between
what causes

or what follows

interference

Guided by the temporary
strategies of adaptation

My mind

finds openings
at dawn

THE OPEN SKY

for Cora

It does not have to be convenient.
It does not have to make you impatient
for the next minute, unsatisfied, restless.
You only have to walk.
A hill is a fine lookout.
The hallmark is the horizon's size,
nothing short of disarming.
Tell me a charm, we'll make it ours
and the hours will deepen
like the greening of May's grass.
Perhaps, then, the deer will come
closer, will not startle but tremble less
at our scent. And that's when
we'll know that we finally belong.
No longer our own names
but bodies enmeshed with the
downed trees and the slow movement
of the creek. No need to speak here.
This is all we need to know.

KADDISH

Lesley Yalen

meds were the space travel of a generation
but they actually mattered

all the bobbing heads, all the shaking hands, all the
infected, afflicted, at-risk

put your hands up

::

I prayed a little when I first encountered death
yesterday, most tame, so innocent
wrinkled, shrunkened,
desiccated I suppose would be the word

it wasn't death's fault
(there were memories)
it wasn't memory's fault
(they were dehydrated)

people remembered her standing on her head
in a leotard a sexy image

In that drip is some kind of sugar water
the body is still a body after all even in the time
between breaths even in the time between death

wavering between two choices, states of matter
or historical realities

Everyone remembers the men on the moon
but no one remembers her first steps
no one who is left so who cares

::

she will allow your kidney in
but

you cannot see her with her eggs out
you can't see her counting the days since her last visitor
the one who helped her wipe her bottom

you may, however, enter with a scope
you may x-ray the lungs, both hearts looking good
very few women will show you but she does
(pessimistically)

::

more like being born
one has to come out all the way
to the point of exaggeration
she will not allow a feeding tube

i.e., don't go to a concert if you don't want a beer
don't go to a garden if you don't like bees

it's true ultimately
disintegration
relieves us
our children

the useful organs are taken to students of the biological human
experience and the rest is zero gravity

clavicle, scapula
nose and toes

all that time spent nitpicking
was only like other time
no different

Spread the blanket, skin has shed all over, she is very cold
what was once clear thinking is now just a prayer from our slaverling
fatuous lips

::

when minutes are scarce
and withholdings no longer

automatically (the way everything is)

who are these people around
so ardent

buried in breath
flooded with breath

how do we manage to hog all the functions?

it's not the air's fault

there's a faulty valve you get to
at the last minute
and pour your heart out
and let your guard down

the odor is unpleasant but related
the cot warm
the drip silent
the limbs turned to prevent sores

At this stage everyone is equally legless
imagining their own flaccid forms

the most popular realizations are

let's think of her as she used to be, a mother, a
wife, a child, an infant, a baby, a few words, a gurgle,

a song in her first, dead language:

everyone in this room was once inside
someone else in this room
it's disgusting

::

hands that wipe the ass
ask for money; this is worth

it. that wipe the ass
of our matriarch, civilization

says such a one becomes
the next leader, the rest

of society being foreign,
sterile, and weak

that's true
by many measures
we don't put
our money where our mother

is we're not willing
to go
all the way
with the body

to nurse
is terribly messy
and reversed
turning
turning
an intellectual question
into a biological question

After that experience,
no amount of money

will make your earnest
wave clean again

::

Once she was ambling
wildly round a flower border
not very attentive to botany
not very respectful of symmetry
seen as pretty

adored by dogs
they smelled something
beneath her clothes,
her skin, her fascia,
her muscles, her bones,
her organs, beneath
and yet exposed
organic and yet implanted

like a surrogate child
or a borrowed lung
that takes so well
it's immortal

Left right
with a boxer's dexterity
a fox slips into the future
then into tenselessness

I know a fox like that
it causes much dismay

A SPELL AGAINST THE DROPPING OF THINGS

Mathias Svalina

Lurch by a bus on a bender,
my darling welts of erasure,
my darling slattern
of shingled wings.

Woe to inches,
direct in threshold,
guidance due to wards,
to extras,
to things apparent & inopportune.

My wars mire
my days & fees unborn
of germs & nitrogen.
World

due combustion night.
The dire morning.
The dire zoo.

A SPELL AGAINST SICKNESS

And this organ is peeled & thrown into the fire.
The I as a symbol burns in the fire.

No voice can be grown in a garden,
or buried by a ditch or canal.
The roots of the tongue will not see the sun.
The tongue must hide its secret.

Being is a potential
for revenge or interrogation.
May the wicked thing go forth,
so that I may see light.

May the parents never find the child.
May the organ be secret & bandaged.
The sickness is my suffering, my voice.
The sickness is my meat.

Let the I burn in the fire.
Burn like a dying language in the fire.
Burn like the shrugging of the hills.

from ZOMBIE

Kevin Holden

in color chrome ball
chromatic prison voodoo power
underwater body puffy armory chirping
snowfields in cinder concrete valves under frozen ground
resin or asphalt turning churning
blurred face blowing grey snow blur
streaked against the sky or
wet white flowers on fire
birds like people moving a boy over there
on the stoop hunched and dreamy, wraithlike
any white film over vision hooded figures moving, floating
white blurs floating like people on fire
diamond black chrysalis open in the thought of woods beyond all this
cement
coal or chalk in all this wire, mesh or mail, cracking circuitry eating
but in the woods we go to bury a body
one, two, over by the tree, the fat round one
the hole in it a big sloping, rooflike tree
dug the soil all day long, sloppy, heavy wet and mosses
boy body transfigured ashlike pure substance
crystal angel demon pyramid heaping waves he's the dark sphinx
then against the violet sky falling in a meteor
the light bearer the morning star
walk over through the dim trees the shadow trees
stacked against that black hill sticks and logs creaking underfoot
over to that red place burning cathedral phosphorescence music
allsound in fiery bands projecting and revolving
in circles like strips of meat or planet orbitals

all up and down around this onefigure zooming in and out of time
icy ziggurat gem angelic noise mathematics black humming
glowing darkly, the prince of this world rose up singing!
I watched from the cover of the pines, under twigs and lichens
I saw old scratch walk jaggedly naked on the old road
he was wearing copper wires he was wearing a coat of colors
dark emeralds falling from his mouth a crown of tungsten
radiant naked marble pulsing
not a derivative total emergence hyperswarm of platinum bees flaying air
sparkling cyclone looking up
under the other littler stars he came from
so much stronger
in and out of time, fractal, rolled up dimensions
he walked barefoot through the mud and icy water
I watched hiding like in a little cave
damp shadows to cover me
but he was burning like potassium like a goldblack tower heaping
sheet lightning and fork lightning pure mind pure law
he came to destroy the world, or take what was left of it
on an onyx throne underground between two rivers
dark grey water, quartz, knots of frogs chirping

AN INDEX OF WIND

Brett Fletcher Lauer

THE CITY'S POPULATION OF WIND is dwindling, escaping further and further to the outer suburbs, past the last station-stop. No one speaks of civilized wind, the bygone days. The wind in the corner is blushing, hair in its eyes, too shy to utter a syllable. A country wind is for flying elaborate kites shaped like tri-planes and camouflaged in clouds high above fields bending toward future fields. Only visionaries speak of "crazy wind." Crazy wind touches the sky. Crazy wind is a tender child beneath a madrone tree. Crazy wind drunk on wine. Dark wind in the evening, sailors stop breathing. Diacritical wind alters the world, how we speak it. Doctor wind is saving a woman on an operating table somewhere between here and now. No one speaks of the dwarf wind, a small wisp around the ankles, what shuffles beneath the bottom of a door, all doors. The famous wind is announced with bugles, with banners trimmed with tassels; a motorcade drives the famous wind to make a speech regarding its relationship to Western Wind. The theoretical wind is a grand forecast, while the teleprompting wind is scrolling: There is no child dancing in the wind, no spring wind in London, no wind begging to rock the grass, no garden wind to give life to the man trapped like wind, no solemn wind, no one alone with the solemn prairie wind, no wind that moves like a cripple among the leaves, the wind is without pathos, passively attending, and crossing the brown land.

THE LATE INTERIOR

After humans were placed in the sky
and returned from the sky ambiguously
different, after clouds launched across

the range of reference or icicles melted
in Rhode Island, after the sun lowered
over hills like propaganda pamphlets

dropped and found half a century later
for sale on the internet as a melancholy
keepsake to hang adjacent the pantry,

grass grows beneath my feet and I try
to remember where I am, after observations
note a number of repulsive particles

held solidly together as a force cradling
me here, undeserving of serious attention.
After smoke exits this wood-grain pipe,

after sensing a resemblance in the hand
holding the pipe, the smoke finds refuge
in a cardigan, the teapot, ceramics, cups

always close at hand, as is silence, shifting
satellite to satellite, one municipality
to the next. After threats of rain the rain

moved off the coast, the same subject
is continued at 72 degrees, breezy, little
or no content, none, and so in a moment

of bewilderment one phones the help desk
and is placed on hold, a piano composition
slowly patterns thought. After the same

subject is exhausted, as in many cases,
by laziness, non-inquiry, false shame, or
fear of man and worldly motives. I will finish

at my own pace before the figures appear
with torches or flashlights or else ringing
the doorbell. After the last firm handshake,

data clouds, table-talk and today's exaltation
at the red door on a secluded street,
after despair, industrial affairs, sloppy

monopolies, bounties and prohibitions
against which the worthlessness or worth
of everything must be weighed alone,

after the patient efforts to rouse oneself
to seek fair treatment, to travel from home,
I travel from home, I seek fair treatment.

SELF-PORTRAIT WITH TUMBLING AND LASSO

Eduardo C. Corral

I'm drumroll and voyeur.

I'm watermark
and fable. I'm weaving
the snarls
of a wolf through my hair
like ribbon. At my feet,
chisels

and jigsaws. I'm
performing
an autopsy on my shadow.
My rib cage a wall.
My heart
a crack in a wall,
a foothold. I'm tumbling

upward:
a French acrobat. I'm judder
and effigy.
I'm pompadour
and splendid. I'm spinning
on a spit, split
in half.

An apple
in my mouth. I know

what Eve
didn't know: a serpent
is a fruit eaten to the core. I'm
a massacre
of the dreamers,

a terra cotta soldier
waiting for
his emperor's return.

When I bow,
a black fish leaps
from the small of my back.
I catch it.

I tear it apart. I fix
the scales
to my lips.
Every word I utter
is opalescent. I'm skinned
and Orphic.
I'm scarlet

and threshold. At my touch,
a piano
melts like a slab
of black ice. I'm
steam rising,
dissipating. I'm a ghost undressing.
I'm a cowboy

riding bareback.
My soul is

whirling
above my head like a lasso.

My right hand
a pistol. My left
automatic. I'm knocking

on every door.

I'm coming on strong,
like a missionary.

I'm kicking back
my legs, like a mule. I'm kicking up
my legs, like
a showgirl.

THANKSGIVING NEVER HAPPENED

R. B. Glaser

let's breed your family dog with my family dog
your religious beliefs with mine
we can say Jesus existed
he was good looking, charismatic and once did a magic trick

if we still hate the cat tomorrow
let's tie him to the tracks

when we all smoked catnip together, I lied
I did feel different

something else I didn't tell you was when I was in the WNBA
I had a very poor shooting streak and couldn't admit it
I'd miss a three-point attempt and pretend it was an ally-oop
"Where were you Swoops?! The ball was there," I'd say, "But where the hell were you?"

I'm not joking, I'm crying
Julia Roberts won a Golden Globe and I'm about to get my period
maybe I'll get it now
or now

when I touched your nose before, it was a signal to God
this one, please put this nose on my kid
when I have one, this nose
when I have one, this kid

all I know is one thing:
hairs really love to grow out of a mole
a homerun feels nice cuz everyone can take their time
people marry easy and it's like playing Blackjack scared

also, that Thanksgiving didn't happen how they said
all it was, was two Indian boys who shared some deer meat with two
Pilgrim girls
and (big surprise)
their families freaked out
the girls got sent to boarding school
the boys were sent into the woods to "think"

and not even the same woods
the boys were sent to two different woods that were very far apart

SHOULD I LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE?

No! I'm getting married on a boat in five minutes
I'm having a baby on the table
I'm elaborately renewing my vows
my child is screaming
my husband is aging
our house is built at a slant
our neighbor is punting our cat
our son is so flaky
my daughter is dating
my dog's now a grandpa
my career is soaring!
my daughter is bankrupt!
my ailments are combining

Can I take a minute to call my dear friend from college? How we
walked together, to and from school. Her ideas were revolutionary.
Her husband is hilarious. She has billowy, black hair.

my curls are confusing!
my husband is suing
his eyes are like fish eggs
his hair is arresting
the clouds are so skinny
the weather's redundant
our president is pretty
my eyelids are crusty
my husband's in rehab
my children run prisons

my legs sound like artics

I go back to college. I'm old but I'm working. My dorm makes me silly.
My body goes backwards.

my teeth get too whitened
I'm back a few birthdays
I'm young and I'm scheming
my boyfriend's proposing
I wish I was older
my math test sucks big time
my best friend smokes Winstons
my allowance is puny
my pet is the best thing
I live with my parents
I'm kind but I'm daring

ODYSSEY WORKS: AN INTERVIEW WITH ABRAHAM BURICKSON

Imagine waking up one day to find yourself immersed in a performance that is all about you. Now imagine that you are the main character in that performance, that it takes place in your house, at your place of work, all over the city where you live, and that the other performers are your friends and family and an eclectic group of artists, most of whom you've never even met. That group of artists is Odyssey Works, and if this is happening to you it is because, some six months earlier, you chose to fill out one of their questionnaires.

Founded in San Francisco and directed by poet-architect Abraham Burickson, Odyssey Works has produced more than a dozen large-scale interdisciplinary collaborative performances since 2001. The goal is simple: to know the audience so well that the group can customize a performance so meticulously that it might change a life. To do this, they spend a great deal of time studying each audience member before formulating an experience for them. The resulting performances, elaborated by theater artists and musicians, writers and visual artists, sound artists and graphic designers, challenge artists to work across disciplines and to upend their understanding of the artist-audience relationship.

The Necessary Angel was created for Sasha Wizansky in 2009. After her piece, Wizansky joined the group to assist in the New York production, this year, of *The Midden of Possibility*. The group is now taking applications for audience members for its 2012 productions in New York, Austin, and San Francisco. To apply to have a free performance made for you, point your browser to www.odysseyworks.org.

Abraham Burickson is the Artistic Director of Odyssey Works, which he founded in 2001. He has produced work with the group in San Francisco, New York, Seattle, and Austin. He is also a poet and an architect, and his writing has been published in numerous literary journals and anthologies (including the *Best New Poets 2008 Anthology*). He has received fellowships from the Millay Colony and the Michener Center for Writers, and, last year, was Risley Artist-in-Residence at Cornell University. His chapbook, *Charlie*, was recently released by Codhill Press. He teaches writing and architecture at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. This interview was conducted by Matthea Harvey.

ODYSSEY WORKS

QUESTIONNAIRE

Filling out this questionnaire is the first step in becoming part of Odyssey Works. To continue on your way, we will need to ask you a few questions. Please answer only the questions that you feel comfortable answering. We encourage you to elaborate on information not directly requested in the question or to skip questions you don't feel strongly about. Bear in mind, *there are no wrong answers*. Please allow two hours to complete this form.

We will be speaking with more people than we will be able to include in the performance. We hope to be able to include you, but we regret that we cannot guarantee one.

Your written responses to this questionnaire are *not* strictly confidential, as they may be included in public documentation. We will do our best to be discreet and to consult with you before doing so. Later in the process you may share information that will be deemed confidential. Any, some, all, or none of your answers may be used to construct this performance. The more details you provide, the better we will be able to create this piece.

WARNING!!!

Warning! Once you have completed this questionnaire, it becomes living material for Odyssey Works. The information you provide will project your profile into the performance, even if you later decide to terminate your involvement with Odyssey Works. The nature of the performance is an ongoing, organic, and evolving process—we won't be able to tell you what it will entail until the performance date nears. We very much appreciate your engagement with us. Our creative process begins with you.

SECTION ONE: Biographical Data

Please tell us very briefly about the following:

- 1) What is your date of birth?
- 2) Place of birth
- 3) Current place of residence
- 4) Other places you have lived in your life
- 5) Relationship status
- 6) Siblings
- 7) Parents, grandparents
- 8) Children
- 9) Occupation
- 10) Education

SECTION TWO: Likes/Dislikes

- 1) What is your favorite color?
- 2) What are your favorite sounds?
- 3) What do you find most beautiful? Least beautiful?
- 4) Describe your favorite/least favorite beverage.
- 5) Describe your favorite/least favorite food.
- 6) Describe your favorite/least favorite place in the world.
- 7) Describe your favorite/least favorite place in the town/city where you currently live.

- 8) How do you spend your free time (hobbies, sports, etc)?
- 9) What are your favorite/least favorite art works and why?
- 10) What are your favorite/least favorite written works and why?
- 11) What are your favorite/least favorite musical works and why?
- 12) What are your favorite/least favorite films and why?
- 13) Other likes/dislikes?

SECTION THREE: History

- 1) Write a short biography in three paragraphs. The first paragraph is about your childhood. The second paragraph is about your life since you left home. The third paragraph is about where you are now.
How do you feel about your mother?
How do you feel about your father?
- 4) What is your sexual orientation? Describe (as much as you feel comfortable) your relationship to sexuality.
- 5) Have you ever been in love? What are your thoughts on love?
- 6) What is your current family life like?
- 7) Describe your history and current relationship with spiritual practices and religion.
- 8) Describe a memory related to the sense of smell or related to food.
- 9) What would your younger self from 10 years ago say to you now?
- 10) 10 years from now, what might your older self say to you now?

SECTION FOUR: Personal

- 1) What is your biggest external fear?
- 2) What do you fear about yourself?
- 3) What is your biggest un-lived dream in life?
- 4) What is preventing you from realizing that dream?
- 5) What do you do well?
- 6) What do you not do well?
- 7) What do you enjoy doing the most?
- 8) What do you enjoy doing the least?
- 9) What is your relationship with money?
- 10) What is your relationship to nature?
- 11) What is your relationship to your spouse/significant other (if there is one)?
- 12) Would you be willing to be blindfolded?
- 13) Would you be willing to wear ear plugs?
- 14) Do you have any food allergies?
- 15) Do you have any physical conditions that might hinder your participation?

SECTION FIVE: Misc.

- 1) Describe a major life-changing experience.
- 2) What is your favorite sense?
- 3) What are your most important values?
- 4) What makes you angry?
- 5) What makes you feel sad?
- 6) How do you feel right now?
- 7) Do you have any pets?
- 8) Describe an interesting or significant dream that you've had recently.
- 9) Based on what you know of Odyssey Works, what do you expect will

happen?

10) Is there anything else you'd like to share at this time?

Thank you!

Please e-mail your response to applications@odysseyworks.org or snail mail it to:

Abraham Burickson

Artist-in-Residence

B40 Risley Hall

Cornell University

Ithaca, NY 14853

The sooner we receive your reply the better.

What is the first step in the process of creating an Odyssey Works piece?

First we send a questionnaire—which serves as an application—to perspective participants. We make the questionnaire long and involved, partly because we need that information for our piece and partly because we need participants who are really going to come to the table. The questionnaire takes anywhere from two-and-a-half to ten hours to fill out. I've done a couple myself, and I will show them to participants as an act of good faith—if you fill out a questionnaire, you can have mine if you want. (The pieces could create a power dynamic that I want to undermine.)

Can you tell me a few of the questions on the questionnaire?

We ask participants to talk about their dreams, their life story. Participants can tell structured stories that seem repeated, so we ask them about a memory related to smell or sound—people haven't formulated that so much. We also ask about their favorite music or book or story—those answers can seem formulated, but we need to know them. Sometimes I'll ask people to sit down for half an hour and do stream-of-consciousness writing—you can see the way their mind moves. I did a sound piece once based on such an exercise: a participant walked through an echoey tunnel in San Francisco, and we played a recording into the tunnel. It wasn't her speaking—it was a voice actor. So she just happened to be walking through the park and then she was in the tunnel, which was an echo chamber of her own thoughts. It was remarkable for that person to encounter her own mind functioning from two months earlier. Of course you can't be inside a person's mind and know how that felt, but in the feedback, she spoke about it having this kind of effect of getting her into almost a dream state, which was what we wanted, because at the other end we had a couple of objects which were symbolic for her.

happen?

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How do you get from the questionnaire to, say, making a sound piece for that person?

We all read the questionnaire, and it's usually a different group of artists each time that I'm working with—there's a core group, but I try to bring in different artists every time to keep things vital. Everybody reads the questionnaire and then puts in their questions for the interview, and then after the interview we put our heads together and go into this free-flowing brainstorming process where we say what we see. Somewhere there's a Venn Diagram of things that seem to be leaping out at us. Some things are obvious, and a lot of it depends on what the person has decided to show us. We start making connections and start thinking about what else we need to know. This is the really fun part: how do you make a connection between this person's philosophical views and the way that they appreciate sound? Between the music that they love and their life history? Then we focus on place, because everything's site-specific. So, the next question is, what's available to us? Somewhere in this pot things just start to cohere. We're always changing up the way we structure these things. I used to give us about six months between the interview and the piece, which allowed for a lot of conversations with friends and family members. Part of that was about getting more information, and part was about involving a person's entire community—we don't want it to be about us performing for them for an audience, but having everybody involved and playing a role.

What is the goal of your performances?

The underlying goal of Odyssey Works is to use whatever tools we can to get somebody into the moment. We don't just want people to say afterwards, "You're great for what you did," but to have the piece have a specific effect. Also, theater can become narcissistic . . . so, how to undo that? Really we want to communicate something in a certain way, so why not make it be about everybody involved?

When I first started out on this, the idea was, "I will get to know you so well that I can create a piece for you." But, the question of subjectivity just rears its head. We began to see very quickly that it was about the relationship we developed with that person—even though it wasn't a normal relationship, it went really deep.

Is it possible to summarize with each person what your goal was in terms of aesthetics and psychology?

Something always emerges—that's the exciting thing. With Sasha Wizansky, there was the divide between the private and the public, the real and unreal. We had been in an intensive retreat prior to working on the piece where we were studying reality in performance—what it means to believe that something you are experiencing is real versus performed. This was on our minds, and it seemed like an awful coincidence that Sasha talked about going off into these immersive otherworldly spaces—the desert, Burning Man—and she talked about some of her favorite pieces of art. She's an incredibly social person and she publishes this magazine, *Meatpaper*, and there's all this life around her, but she goes between these two poles. It was just screaming out to us: this is what you need to work with. It's not that we had a goal to make her X or to make her Y, but we wanted to take the structures that were innate to her life and put them into our performance, so that if art reflects life, her art reflects her life. We watched her favorite movie, *Wings of Desire*, which she's watched thirty times . . . and what's it about? The angels are not in this world, but they want to be in this world, and vice versa—and there's this crossing of thresholds. It was so perfect. We generally try to avoid using film—there's something similar about what we do to film. When you watch a film you empathize with a character who's living inside this powerful narrative. In a way we're making a movie that the person is in. And it does have profound effects.

To prepare for Sasha's piece, one guy did this graph of reality and unreality and the way that each scene would float between the two.

We did a lot of sketching around and playing around with dramatic structures, and figuring out what we wanted the piece to be like experientially. The temptation is to go to narrative first—I've learned over the years that you really need to go to the experience first, and understand the narrative from there. We also wanted the experience to be divided in half so that in San Francisco there would be these loud social pieces, and then when she left the city it would be more unreal.

After the little intro that I was a part of, how did the San Francisco part of the piece begin?

We had some of her friends come over for a normal-seeming breakfast. Then we started slowly bringing in more and more friends—more of the social world—and of course she hadn't invited anyone. Then we brought in people from work, and then we brought a writer who was trying to pitch an article for *Meatpaper*, and then a film crew shows up and things started to get really absurd, right? So she knows it's a performance. You know it's a setup when so many friends come over for breakfast, but you're still sitting around with your friends having breakfast—hard to say that's not reality. So the question was, at what point was she crossing into unreality? By the time there was a family of five holding up paint chips to the wall, talking about doing a house swap that she had never suggested, it was obviously unreal. Then we went into this other space where she's with angels in a library. The angels were there to carry her between worlds. You know you don't want to be too performative at the end of the night, when people are very sensitive—you want to keep those qualities toward the beginning.

I loved the part where you take her to the coffee truck where she likes to get coffee and her friends are there, wearing horse heads. This came out of her

habit of taking cell phone photos of a small pony beside her cappuccinos, but you completely transformed it. Where does that fit in?

That's very social—the people in the horse heads were her friends—but it's got elements of unreality in it. There's something about humor . . . I love humor; it's an energized way of engaging with people, but it puts a protective sheath around you. With Sasha's friends in horse heads, there was a constant pointer to the unreality of the situation, right? The horses are saying, "Things are happening." So the unreal has invaded the real, and hopefully the real invades the unreal, which is a little bit of what humor does.

Right after that, we blindfolded her and put her in the back of this car, and I told her a long story . . . then she goes and has three meetings with people. Those are very real and social in a certain sense, but because she's been put in a different state, and doesn't have the same sensual awareness of arrival and departure, she was in something more like a dream state. For the first meeting we brought her to the end of this dock, and she sits down, and there's her friend Shoshanna.

She seemed struck by how she didn't know whether she was talking to her friend Shoshanna or her friend "Shoshanna." Was Shoshanna told what the conversation was supposed to be about?

We told her to have the most direct connection possible. Shoshanna meditated for an hour preceding the conversation, so she would be as available as possible to really see and empathize with Sasha, and meet her where she is. It wasn't a normal conversation, but there was no script. If Sasha hadn't asked me to burn the tape, I would know what they talked about.



I was going to ask you about the privacy part. Do you tape everything?

Just about. That was very cleverly taped—we had hidden a camera on a boat nearby, which she couldn't see, and Shoshanna was wired. We document things, but if the participant says, "I think that was private," I can't even see it.

The next scene was with a couple, recently engaged, and they also meditated and had been sitting in a café talking for quite a while, in an attempt to develop closeness between them, before having the conversation with Sasha. Of course, we had some problems with cops on the way.

What happened with the cops?

We were almost there—we're in the town, but there's a random DWI stop where the police are checking everybody. They didn't like the fact that there was a woman blindfolded in the back of the car not wearing a seat belt! They gave me the little hard time that cops like to give everybody, and then they made small talk! I'm like, "I'm in the middle of an experimental performance project, can't you see that?"

Reality jumped right in, right?

Yeah, it jumped right in. Which is great, because we want to be able to create a piece where every intrusion is part of the piece, so there's no protective walls—we're in it, I'm in it, it's a performance for me as well. So Sasha made a joke about how we had hired all these fake cops for this piece.

Did Sasha find a meaning in the piece other than the one you were working toward?

She took our use of angels to another level. They had this very specific

role: to bring her and the world across the threshold from the unreal and the immersive to the social and the very real. We meant for them to guide her, but she saw them as protectors. In the end, that's what she talked about—she said, "A bunch of people got together and decided that I needed angels." That's not what we had decided, but it was in the piece, which is a big box waiting for meaning.

She spoke a lot about the end of the night when she is taken to a tent to sleep and the angel says, "If you need anything, I'll be right here."

We had had a lot of conversations about how freaked out you would be if you were on the side of a cliff somewhere, in the fog and cold, after all these experiences. We wanted her to feel comfortable, but she took the whole guardian angel thing to the next level. All these things went awry. We had planned on having the angel on this rock way out there, and I'd stood there with the angel and she tried different poses. It was just going to be the most beautiful image. That night it was foggy as hell, though, and you couldn't see that rock from where Sasha was, so the angel ended up sleeping nearby. It turned out to be much better, because the angel was there watching over her, and not a symbol in the distance. When I'm doing these projects, I live for such serendipities.

Did Sasha have moments where she didn't know if something was part of the piece or not?

Yes, which I've learned over the years is a wonderful bonus. People report back to me that they wonder what was supposed to be in the piece, and what wasn't, for days and days afterwards. Sometimes they call me up and say, "Is it over, because things have been happening?" or, "How can I stay in the state that I was in?" I love that. One time I lost a guy . . . it was a bit of a problem.

You lost the participant?

Yeah—in a piece called “Locating the Borderlands.” He was walking along and saw a protest outside a loft development. There were four people with poorly drawn signs, shouting a little too loud about the gentrification of the neighborhood, and he thought, “This is a bullshit protest—this is obviously part of the piece.” So he went and joined them. He went upstairs to the loft and lay down in the doorway to block it. The cops came and zip-tied him, and he was sure that real cops would have handcuffs. And the cop doesn’t even have a metal badge, but a fabric badge, so he thought, “Not a real cop, right?” It wasn’t until he was actually in the police station that it occurred to him that we probably did not hire this police station out.

That’s incredible. What have been some other unpredictable outcomes in your pieces?

We did one piece for a guy named Henry Rosenthal, and it was really a transformative experience for us. He was going through some of the same issues we were at the time, and he was so open with us that we were able to be frank about it. Not just in terms of psychological experiences, but also in terms of aesthetics—dreams, philosophy . . .

Was he the one with the two-headed—

He was the one with the two-headed calves. He owns two taxidermied two-headed calves.

This is a big question in our work: how do you work with symbolism? In a film or fictional piece, you create the characters and the symbols, and control both. But how do you use a symbolic object with a real person? How do you know what this object is invested with? With Henry and the two-headed calves, it’s hard to avoid the symbolism there. We spent

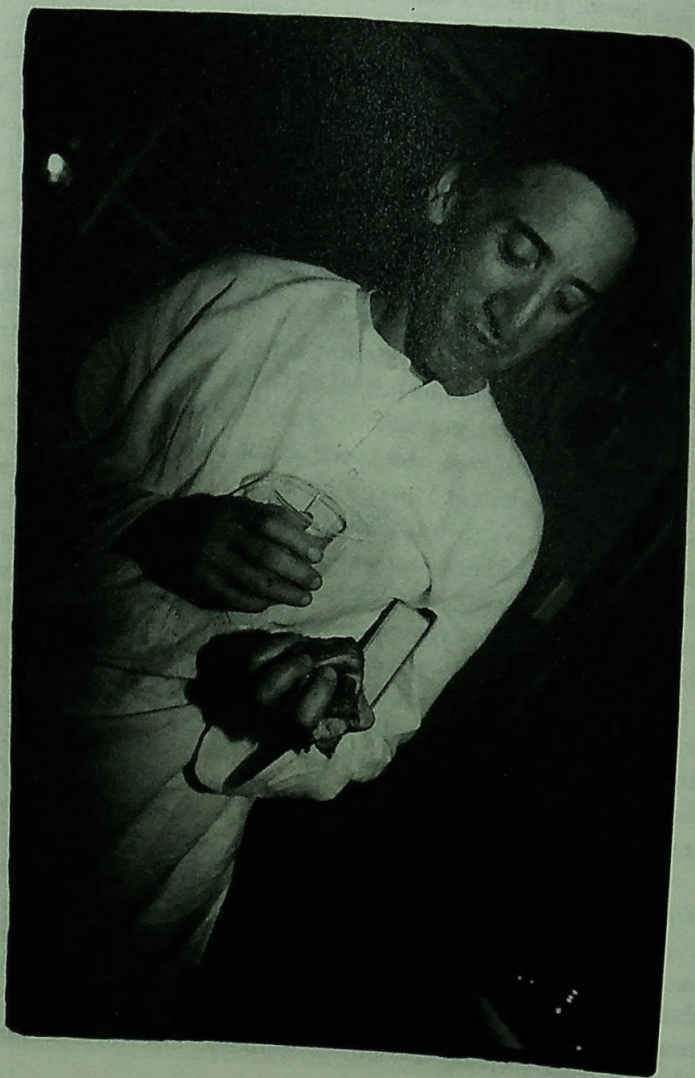
a long time investing this calf with the idea of duplicity, and it worked.

Could you describe the parts of the piece that you found so transformative? In the video, Henry is given a meat heart that's strapped to him in cellophane, and he was told in the spur of the moment to protect the heart.

Right. The person who gave him the meat heart said, "This is your heart, protect it," which she was not instructed to say—for some reason she was inspired to say that. Might have been just chance, or maybe she was onto something—apparently she was, because we had expected him to just lose the thing when he was attacked by these witches who were right outside the door. This was all in the bowels of a World War II troop transport ship—he was in an operating room, and the witches were right outside. And they weren't just actors—well, one was an actor, but the other had played the role of a witch in Henry's life, and the role of somebody who might try to steal a meat heart. She was supposed to succeed, but he fought for it, just would not let it go—that direction to protect his meat heart really rang a bell with him. We hadn't thought, "Oh, he needs a new heart," but we found out later the idea had been in his mind for a while. He had already been nailed in a coffin for forty-five minutes, taken into this underworld across the river Styx, and then he was given a new heart. And so something about the physical nature made him more open to meaning, and to the otherworldliness of it. And he said—I think it was in the video—that he went to an atavistic state of deep paranoia, certain that people were going to try to steal his heart.

Did you change the direction of the piece as a result of Henry keeping the heart?

We talked about it all night. There's the myth that your heart has to be lighter than a feather on the scales, right? At the end of the piece there was a trial, and he was the one on trial. Matthew and I were the prosecutor and the defense—I really wanted him to convict himself, and Matthew



really wanted him to acquit himself. We had set up all these feathers in the ceiling of a four-story cargo bay that had been turned into an open courtroom, and we had these things ready to get released if he had been acquitted and we had an ax for him to chop his two-headed calf in half if he had been convicted. He acquits himself, and he's still got the heart in his hand, and he catches a feather, and the scene is right there, it's right out of this myth. We'd already been working with myth, just not that one!

I've just been rereading Peter Brooks' *The Empty Space* and he talks about what it would be like for the theater to be living. I think that was the urge we had in that piece: to make it so there was a real consequence. We always want to take the protective sheath on top of most of our artistic and social endeavors off and give you a sense that this is reality—that what happens here matters.

What is your relationship to the participants like after the piece?

It's always sort of a shocking thing: you interview a person, you videotape them, and then you start reading everything they've written to you and sent you, and then you talk to their friends about them . . . and they become a character. But, it's also very intimate.

Do you think that the work you're doing is almost a way of engaging with another self that's also part of you?

That's the incredible thing about this process: I've looked at fifty interviews and more questionnaires, and there's not a single person who, after getting that deep into their information, I didn't feel was . . . I don't know if "deserving" is the word. My capacity for judging a person has fallen away, because every person that I see is in some way struggling with the same things that I am. People have different political views than I do, or different values, or whatever. But when you think, "Can I create a beautiful

experience for this person?" everything changes—you think about them in terms of their experiencing self. And it's like mine. Some people are wounded in some way that I don't feel like I can responsibly handle, and other people are closed or very defended, but those would be the only reasons for not doing a piece for somebody.

Do you feel changed by the performances?

Always.

Do you have to turn that off when you're out in the world, out and about? Or do you find yourself looking at people on the subway and thinking, I would make this piece for them?

Boy I would love to have that all the time—it might cause problems, though. Would it? I don't know. It's not like it's there all the time. It's how I'd like to live my life, though. On the subway, I look at people and I'm always reacting to how they are on the surface: this one's dressed that way, and this one's listening to stupid music, or I really like those shoes, or that's a great book, must be intelligent. It's hard—I feel like I can't penetrate to what the experiential self is behind that, generally, without some big act of imagination. Our participants are so generous—they let me penetrate to that.

Are you working on another Odyssey Works project?

My particular cycling with Odyssey Works is: I work on one, or in this case two, and then for a week or a month afterwards I feel great that we've done this amazing thing. And then for four or five months after that I say, "I'm never doing that again—it's too much work, I can't believe it, I just need to write my own poems in the corner of my room with nobody else's input." Then, somebody calls me and says, "You know, you should really

do this thing, do it again," and eventually I say maybe . . .

Have you been involved in every single piece?

I'm the director of the group, so I'm kind of the engine behind it. People do smaller ones on their own sometimes. I think people should go and do them! I'd love it if everybody did it! If you want advice just give me a call! Go for it!

How did the first piece come about?

It started out among friends. My friend Matthew said to me, "I don't want a birthday party—do something different if you're planning on doing anything." We'd had this conversation previously about the question of whether or not you can know if you affect your audience. Are we just casting seed wildly like an oak tree, or is there a way to actually relate? We thought about love poetry and how you write a love poem to somebody. You don't use words you think they won't understand, unless you're a jerk and just trying to impress them—you write the poem in an effort to evoke similar feelings in your beloved. So we'd had this conversation, and nothing had come of it . . . but when Matthew said what he said about his birthday, I thought, "Ah! This is what we have to do!"

What did you do?

So, his piece was only eight hours long—definitely a light version. Matthew, who eventually was the cofounder of Odyssey Works with me, was the subject. I had no idea what I was doing—I talked to Shoshanna, who is a collaborator, about the idea, and about Matthew. It was really wonderful. You don't talk about friends in such a way, to try and understand what would affect them—you talk about what they did, or how wonderful or how much of an asshole they are. We realized that he was on this trip in his

art that dealt with death and rebirth, and we could go there with him. We would kill him and rebirth him, in the four ways that we had identified as being most important to him—physical, intellectual, sexual, and artistic. We started out the day of his piece with objects that we acquired or reconstructed from his childhood, by talking to his parents. There was this weird Bauhaus exhibit in town, which featured a room filled with Mylar and nothing else. We went there with him, and dropped the objects from his childhood in there—it was a womblike state. Then we took him through a series of scenes. He and I have an intellectual connection: we had founded another performance group before, and we were always engaged in an intellectual discourse, and we never agree, and we always agree, we're always on the same page. In one scene we went to the cemetery in Colma; it was raining, and my intention there was to kill our connection and then later rebirth it. So we had a conversation, and every time it would start to lead to some kind of synergy, I would cut it off and turn it in the other direction. He knew and I knew what we were doing. And an amazing thing happened: we could see our two selves. In the end we had him dig a six-foot-deep hole in the beach and get in, and we buried him save for a hole for him to breathe through. And then everybody just walked away, and that's the end, right? He's not told what to do, but he's essentially buried alive.

Good Lord.

It took half an hour for him to dig himself out, because once he was in, he was pretty far in. But once he got out, at that point he was so ecstatic that he tore off all his clothes and jumped in the ocean.

Do you think these performances feel safe for the participants?

That's my goal. I would say that takes up, like, 25 percent of our conversation. We're entrusted with a lot, and it's important that the person feel

safe. So far, everybody has felt safe, and everyone's been really grateful for what we've done.

Yeah, that seems apparent, but it also seems like you put them through moments of discomfort. It's not just the palette of happy moments—there's definitely awkwardness and fear as well.

Right, because the value we aim for is not necessarily happiness, but a fully felt aesthetic and psychological experience. We could just throw a big party or a wedding or feast or something if we wanted to just make the participant happy, but there's something about trying to get to the point of challenge that is more rewarding than just having a good time.

OF GENOCIDE, OR MERELY SOUND

Roger Reeves

How much saying nothing
gets you a starling or a jewel.
Gather enough starlings
in a box and you have a factory
of genocide, or merely sound
unraveling like a wing.
Gather enough people
in boxes on a train
and you can watch a country
disappear into the husks of anise
seeds and the morning frost
just outside Poland or Germany.
I'm not allowed to speak
for people in boxes stacked
on boxes stacked on rails
because I have not been pierced
by stars or gas or hunger.
I belong to the pigeon
who darns the stray threads
of the last evening on earth
just above a soldier's helmet.
I belong to the silence of a pomegranate
just cut open, the red seeds
pebbling a white plate.
In other words, I am a suicide
rather than a murder,

a could confused for a cloud.
If allowed, I might say
this is how genocide begins.

ANYTHING WITH BLOOD

JonBenét Ramsey requests no pictures
be taken of her thirst.

Yes, she's come back
as the tongue of a hummingbird.

In the afterlife, God refuses to feed
anything with blood thicker than a cloud.

In the afterlife, a chair is only as relevant
as the angle it makes with the body.

JonBenét Ramsey is only as relevant as a chair
God climbs upon to remove cobwebs

from the mouth of the moon. He slips.
This is where a brick shatters a palace window.

God's slim head. JonBenét Ramsey requests no
pictures be taken of the blood pooling at her feet.

EXIT INTERVIEW

What Was the Most Delicate Thing in Rio?

Two men lifting a wooden door
onto the bed of a truck,

a plastic bag beating the hind legs
of a dog, and then, clapping

though I am unsure of who
told the police to turn their backs

and watch the canal split the city
into two cities—the mother city

and the city of small coffins
which is part of an even smaller city,

a flat city in which women eat spaghetti
off of a sidewalk at midnight. Honestly,

I am unsure if all of this happened,
but I am sure it all happened today.

And What Have You Forgotten?

The white sheet of my birth.
Whose breath is in this mouth.
And which mouth at this table
lit every cigarette dangling

from these musicians' lips.
I have forgotten how long it takes
to wash a knee that isn't your own.
I have forgotten to hang the laundry
and now we must enter the day
wearing nothing but smiles.
I have forgotten the coconut
rotting on the roof, the roof,
and the tangerine seeds I spat
onto a lawn so green I believe
its only purpose is for me
to undress you there.
I have forgotten you, outside
this door, in a nation covered
in oil below the waist.
I have forgotten my name,
and now I must go about the streets
turning, answering to every creak
and clank the wind makes
with the fire hydrants
or a chain link fence or . . .
Yes, call me again. I am beneath
whatever noise can no longer name itself.

And what if this is an imaginary city?

*Then a small yellow bird to ask hard questions, like: what shall we inherit
from a cloud, what tree shall last the winter of this city's rage, and whose rage
will the children hide in after these wars?*

Then a mistimed sunrise to send this bird through the city in search of

water and a new name for *decay*.

Then the old word, collapse, and a gaggle of mosquitoes to prick the soles of our feet and drain what liquor we could not sweat out while dancing samba in front of a bar that tempts every sober man to fall beneath his sobriety.

Then forgiveness for the man who rises every morning to watch the school children from his window. Then, hard fruit for which no mouth will complain.

And a school bell. And a telephone pole for which a child will climb in her school uniform and watch the red flower of a fireman's helmet climb toward her.

And what if this were real—that in our haste to impress the women circling below us, something like a flower bloomed beneath our feet and rose toward us like smoke?

How could we not put our lives in danger? Who would not want this fire pushing them toward heaven?

And when you said nothing?

The woman's hair caught fire and spread across the floor.

And some shouted fire.

And some shook as if caught in a fire.

And some complained of a lack of water.

And some complained of the water.

And the boys rode their bikes crushing every cicada that wept that night.

And a white horse came up from the train tracks after eating whatever
it could find.

And the drummers could not remember whose hands were whose.

And a door opened.

And the faith of a mustard seed rolled in, but no one saw it resting in
the corner.

And the church said amen.

And lo, a few men broke.

And lo, blankets fell from heaven in the form of an usher's white gloved
hands, and covered the fire.

And lo, no one ran from the flames.

And lo, the children were told to cover their faces.

And lo, one face remained opened as a wound.

And what were the people like?

A ramp for which nothing could come up or down.

Two leaves floating in a pool and a white cat

pawing at the water. Thirteen dollars

pressed against a large heel. A list

placed between the morning and a red wall

resembling a lover's mouth. A park.

And the park next to the park. A pink flower

that provides no fragrance. A plaza at the end

of an avenue dedicated to the city's stray dogs.

A mountain for which all of the city's trees bend toward.

And suppose you were to say...

I have decided to pedal hay into your mouth from a forgotten haystack at the edge of a field. I have decided the yellow flowers surrounding the soccer stadium did not have blood inside them, but they were bleeding.

And tonight when a girl, about eight, offers herself to me for a few centavos, I will not think of pines dropping their version of leaves onto a dirt road in Arkansas, or a bull roaming a field in fog, or you at the edge of a ditch in the same fog, but instead, I will think of beginnings.

In the beginning, there was enough poverty for everyone.

And then it rained, and there was only enough poverty for a small group of children to wander out of the hills and sleep in boxes, outside of the cathedral, their horny feet protruding into the night.

RABBIT

Michael D. Snediker

Klonopin, cymbalta glow low in dusks of bracken. Tomaselli garden with real pills in it bled out shrubs. This is where I see him, years later. I thump the others quiet, *put out your cigarettes, dimbright, stop clinking bracelets, stop chomping, he's here.* He was as he'd been a little older. Twigs in his hair, like he were becoming scarecrow, or scarecrow slowly becoming human. And there was I in a variation of earlier birdlike outfits, fewer patterns, more knowingly angular, theatre of jarring neutrals. My ears twitched silver. We didn't have words. I was real, far as that goes, though this recent development disrupted what hitherto had been an easy arrangement. *What's he looking at, I thought, is that aura cowlicking my head again, or were there crows.* Vision pretty much stayed asymptotic, each squint approaching the other's axis like a pastoral spaghetti-western. The trees were paste, the pills falling. We were riping in reverse, wishing we could stick everything back as we'd found it. And so I scampered off with the others just before the warrens vanished. Single gleaming shape broken back into gloaming, its being evening didn't matter, nor March nor May. Branches, leaves. And sepals closing where just before there had bloomed a fairy, flower-faced, unblooming from bract like a jewel-box ballerina. She spun rusty, wand uncreaking against her dewdrop gown. She seemed to speak in reverse. The dizziness receded, dewdrops drying. The pebbles of my neck still smarted from where her wand had cracked. And there were shadows in the velvet grass. I was leaning against a fowlhouse, which at least bore the sound of logic. In the din of clucks I barely noticed molecules exchanging valentines. Blood was feathering, paling. The further horror of the event of returning to the toy version of oneself being that one can't respond. I wasn't dying, I was receding, growing softer. There was no memory of fever, there being no memory. And I was unchucked from the heap of dejecta, saved from fire, returned to a shelf, the bow around my neck

fluorescent with a new vigor. The threads fraying from paws found ways back in, homecoming of glassy parasites. I was ravishing again and loved and barely felt it in the batting. Soul-swaddle doesn't know the trouble it gets into. Doesn't know all goes dark. Nor how long in stocking. Nor scent of oranges, almond. Placid sprig unknowing held in soft unfeeling arms. Nor boy approaching, *stop*.

BORDERS OF EVANESCENCE

Ewa Chrusciel

I grab for a sausage and rose petal jam at the airport before I leave Poland. I am a peasant princess. With a eunuch knife in my hand. This, my transcontinental dowry. In the air the pork scratching, pangs of conscience. Sizzles. Folkberg variations. Folk cabbala. Kiełbaska, kiełbasa, kabanos, kabanosik. Swaddled offspring. The sacrificial baby of my tongue. Foreign gods hover in the air. Forage replete. Dogwoods grow in silence. I will offer this flower of Polish fields to Lady Liberty. Upon landing, I promise myself to leave the sausage behind in the nearest bathroom. If God lets my sausage in, I will eat it like a saint with incense, circle a table with Gregorian chants. The baggage carousel spurts out my luggage and with the air of greatest conspiracy, I transfer my sausage from a carry-on into checked luggage. I look around. I pray for my sausage while I keep moving towards customs. Angelus trickles. Angelus salivates. St. George is about to put his spear through a sizzling dragon. The officer pulls me aside. My luggage goes through a "sausage scan." The juices drained, sterile. Can an old sausage be born young again? The officer holds my sausage up to the light. His babushka trophy. "It's a sealed sausage," I declare with pride, I brought him a new species. "But you declared: no meats," the officer says. "Sealed sausage is not a meat." "Sealed sausage is a sealed sausage!" As I exclaim it, the guardian angels of my sealed sausage swarm and sow their faces under the investigation light. The officer blinks when I repeat with determination: "A sealed sausage is a sealed sausage." He looks blinded. The hypnotic alliteration throws him back to the waters of his childhood where eels jiggle their Scottish dances in the water. Oh, detained sausage. Saint of arrest pray for us. Oh, a new species have mercy on us. Escape of borders. Oh, an oven bird whose migratory song consists of a sausage a sausage a sausage. Oh, a tower of Lady L feed us. The sausage of martyrs. The sealed patriarch. Let the Virgin Liberty swallow it.

THE THETA XI CHAPTER

Anne Marie Rooney

Confer to comfort: can each girl be first
Splayed by the loyal man who opened me.
Underneath whom the sea. An April full
Like hot. Hydrangeas delighting in the window.
Then winds. Then every fight of blooming jets
Through the halls & though the night was long
I can't say. Much like a puppet, yawned-past
But plastered and I was outwardly okay. A picture
With crayon wetting and tape over the owl face
Was meaning. The thing the fist of which
Could crackle anything. I fought off the beer.
I thought of a fear, and story to plant in: able, angry,
Full. I too can slick green with a kindness.
To empty the poison in. Thrashing tails and that which
Paved his sorries. I was that girl always pretty and privy.
Betrayed by my ancestry and crying O
To be under wood. Crash a day. An Apriling kid
Who'd lock down and cater. Under the world
Of him and aware of it. Did a salty powder become
The bluster. The drowned feeling. From whence
Throating. He unarched my face. And mouth nose eyes.
Each part interior, my inferior, was becoming.

from YENNECOTT

Jeffrey Yang

Alone in the woods
near running brooke, far
from wind, shelter built
pyramid of bark
leaves, saplings
provisions set
for the known hour
light deepening late
spring's colors, his eyes
felt but hidden

::

Silence of birds and trees
silence of breath, waves
of pain beginning
silence of walking feet
silence of song
cradling belly
her voice so sweet
sap-rise, soft
bed of moss
butterfly and dragonfly wild
flowers all, root-drink

::

Sun fading, falling thru branches
pain still pain without sin
panis angelius fit panis hominum
as it was as it was
at the sacred table
breath returning
thru the door of horn
vanishes on swift wings
thru the ivory door

::

Cirkell of fiere
embers floating to stars
divine spark inside
breathing breathing
I am coming, Mesingw
is coming
I am here

::

Beaver appeared, then otter, muskrat,
toad on a lily-lotus, turtle's
slow search earth rocked
tectonic web, spider's net
Mesingw astride deer
face red black mask
eponym of peace, of
silence, steps, breath
making the forest
opening the path

Thoughts born of words:
You are not myself
nor any other
we are: thoughts

::

Surrounded by water and darkness
immersed in the sound of her heart
If this is blindness what is sight?
Before memory

::

They walked toward me from a great distance
and clothed me in garments of sun
faces so familiar, from a city of bridges
city of stone, city of ringroads
waterway fields
now dust motes in a sunbeam
They rubbed my back and my feet
whispered sweet words to me
brought me food and drink
So thirsty I stood
alone
as they danced around me
knowledge and acknowledged
Salt flowing down
my body, a
vessel, my
blood my water
mixing with earth

Horus not of silence or sun
but of the child
The cries in my arms

::

Stepped into water to wash
by dawn's first light
I carried her
she
carried
my heart unsequestered
forest
Mesingw's breath
everything living emotion
motion in stillness
water clear as the air
was clear, the earth, my
thoughts, hers

::

And after many days
of water-silence, naps
and dreams,
her milk feeding my heart, her voice
gentle wind, her face blossoming sky
I returned to the village of nine houses
without a name, uprooted
not-yet-born calling me calling me
Tears of the Father

A IS FOR

Sandra Doller

Brother who out of earth
has not fallen blackened out of
birth in a temper—tempting to
see an O in you—O for the
overcome—O for O—small
hand brother with that in your
mouth an A is how you say L—
an owl couldn't hear you better
from this distance—the waves
hit your head—she said Austin—
I will have you—all ways
in awe—a tin tin cup from
far far—open the clay
pot with your—some children
they never move—born
from black safety hard to get back—
stay a while baby—who who will
sing for you—the whole world womb—
whirly vision—if vision—if you
hear say A—test the senses
with Ah—world beyond physique
patted downy owl—will not die—
of lake—not lacking in
waterfront—the A's have it—
who who will not—give this—
boy body without sound—
does not make no sound—nor
cause none—see a sound—

the teacher of water to behave—
like wet, stippled earth—
transformy all over the narrative—
there is no song—no
mother—no sum.

IN THE GRAND BALLROOM OF THE NEW ETERNITY

Mark Strand

They sway like drunks in delirious exile from sense, letting their blindness guide them ever further from what might have been theirs, letting their former selves fade and be lost in the dusk of forgetfulness, never to be regained, never to be more than an idea of once having been, so that the light which had been theirs is gone for good. And when the doctors come, it is too late. The shades above the city have already been drawn, the pockets of wind have been emptied.

THE SOCIAL WORKER AND THE MONKEY

Once I sat in a room with a monkey who told me he was not a monkey. I understood his anguish being trapped in a body he detested. "Sir," I said, "I think I know what you are feeling, and I would like to help you." "Treat me like a monkey," he said, "it serves me right."

TROUBLE IN POCATELLO

It was autumn. It was late in the day. A storm was coming. Flocks of birds were flying south. A pink and purple sunset stained the house, the wind gusted, branches tossed, leaves dropped like dead moths on a sisal rug. I'm home, said the husband. Not again, said the wife.

THOSE LITTLE LEGS AND AWFUL HANDS

Night had fallen and a man who was staying at the Grand Hotel walked to the beach, lit a cigar, opened a black umbrella, and leaned back in a canvas beach chair, holding the cigar in one hand and the umbrella in the other. I wanted to ask him, why the umbrella, but I was too timid. Then, I heard him say, "Those little legs and awful hands, will I never be rid of them?" I patted my legs, then looked at my hands, and knew that he had not meant me, and certainly not himself, but maybe another, someone he might have hated, or even loved. But down the beach, a woman, wearing very large mittens, was coming towards him, rapidly, with baby steps. He jumped up from the beach chair, tossed his cigar, and with his umbrella began to run; he ran and ran, trying to escape, as if he could ever escape.

THE RIVAL

Brian Kim Stefans

Try to avoid the rival
skulking with rubber claws,
a humorist
of the disequibrious universe,

bus pass
in hand, though vegetable-like
following you
into allegory.

Sleepless (needs no sleep),
vague, yet
sincere
(duplicity is obsolete)

narrowing your
desires,
the rival coughs,
and suggests you breathe.

Suspect the rival
is not naked
like you, or spawns
further

rivals—he's
exhausted,
just keeping up
an appearance of undiminished health.

That's why he's a rival.
Come on,
you understand.
A landscape needs this.

Founts flow in perspective.
Blowfish
need composure.
The rival insures this.

Speak to
the rival,
and gain only mistrust,
vitamins, of sorts,

stretches, complex enemas
to make the toes
(and the agility)
grow.

Puking in the park,
the rival
signs autographs
to prove not true

is you,
that our weather
was a lie,
and they're really not enjoying this.

Complexity lies elsewhere
like a sun,
subject to game-changing
controversies,

the
rival
absenting these bets,
slumming in a newspaper hat.

Curse the rival,
but not like the rival
whose verses libel
you, of

course, as overboard
your words
are cast
indifferently, until you're thirty.

At maturity,
the claws come
out.
This is a bitchy rival.

Topple this other rival
exiting a theatre
puffy in face, in gut.
Then try somewhat harder.

Enjoy this,
hero.

[THERE IS A WHITE BLACK BEAR,
SOME CARIBOU, A FEW BIRDS.]

Jennifer Denrow

There is a white black bear, some caribou, a few birds. I open them up. There is splendor inside. It looks beautiful. The only time I ever died I was at my house in the hallway. There were wild places of love then. We sorted through them and came back from it. We went out riding. We wanted to strangle the horses.

[IT'S THE QUIETEST MOMENT.]

It's the quietest moment. All around us the animals hold their breath. The wind comes. I hold us here. I hold us here for as long as I can. The horse pushes off. From above him we can see how he is without us. It is shocking. We let go of each other's necks. Most of the time I can think of it coming, like it's part of its own companionship or that it's without meaning. What it's attached to is taken through us. It walks and is calm from then.

[IN THE COUNTRY, WE BURY
OUR BODIES IN THE GROUND IN
MAPS.]

In the country, we bury our bodies in the ground in maps. We put them on each other and drive our hands around silent. You put dirt on the maps and say we will never leave. The abysmal parts continue. Pretty soon I am dragging your arms around on top of me. I clean them for you. I give them back. You rest in place. I say the quiet myth to your body. We end up looking for you all over the place.

V-NECK T-SHIRT SONNET

Joseph O. Legaspi

I love a white v-neck t-shirt
on you: two cotton strips racing
to a point they both arrived at: *there*
vigor barely contained, flaming hair,
collarless, fenced-in skin that shines.
Cool drop of hem, you, soft & lived-in,
are so unlike my father & to bed you go,
flushed with fur like dried grass, a rabbit's
burrow or nest for a flightless bird, brooding.
Let me be that endangered specie,
huddled in the vessel of the inverted
triangle: gaped mouth of a great white
fish on the verge of striking, poised
to devour & feed on skin, & all.

BOXES WITH RESPECT TO POE

Kimiko Hahn

NOISE

In a wakeful spell, the clichés lull: the neighbor's teething baby wails, a grating cranks shut, a woman calls out, a man shouts back, the sanitation truck pulls to the curb with engine, men and suction, the upstairs flushes, my husband snores. Finally I drift in the traffic's hush. Stay—the *stillness gave no token*. A baby grew inside me once. A gurgle only I could hear. Birds cry beyond the sill, as well.

OVERRIPE

A slice across the orange pink to seeds, abundant as deer droppings. They spill from the cavity except the one that ceases minute travel to skin. Pungent flesh, bereft papaya—in another context, a quickening, a stench. Nothing but nurture for an animal; for this animal, a narrative tracing an event. Then finding peace—*surcease of sorrow*.

SPRING

Shaft of orange. Shaft of gust. Of lilacs. Of the next-door girls' yellow bus, exhausted. Of the husband with morning papers at the front door. In back, deer at the salt lick. Salt on the table. Two poached eggs in flowered cups. Slats of shadow across "tribunal." Shafts of kind *nepenthe*.

PERFUME

Always a taste on back of the tongue—*perfumed from an unseen censer*.
Mother, a dozen years dead but still a flight of scent: spearmint gum, a
leather clutch, sesame bath-oil beads. The shadows gone. Shade flown—a
kindness, that raven. As the dictionary tells it: plunder, seize, devour, prey.
She would have said, to take away by force.

FIRE

The previous owners planted narcissus in the back and I clipped a dozen
for a vase, forgetting the room will smell like an electrical fire. A fire—*now*
burned into my bosom's core where little else sparks but the teaching of
iamb. The internal rhymes rather than the infernal.

MORE NOISE

She did not know what a cervix was. Also, *the Night's Plutonian shore*. Of
the first I was sure.

THIRST

Rising mid-night, the aging woman's wont, for water, for the cold tiles to
cool perspiring even in December, and for the quiet that is a hum—*quaff, oh*
quaff. Solitude arrives with irony: now that the daughters have moved away
I wish for them to bring me coffee and clamor. Even news of distant wars.

—for Eamon

[A CENTO IS WHEN...]

Sarah Gambito

A cento is when you laugh at your mollusk beating organs. You cover yourself with your hands and you think. This is my skin. Not just the bag that keeps everything in. I don't want to speak about race because it makes you so angry. Organs bumping out like fishheads. When I bumped into another Asian woman on the stairwell. We shouted. I'm sorry. I didn't realize. How could you not realize when I'm standing here. I didn't know if you were talking on your phone or going through your purse. I'm not you. I'm not you. You are very weird. You are very weird.

DRINK THE SEA OUT

Dot Devota

I didn't expect turbulence means I've been forgotten before I arrive

Discussing my own termination makes me a laborer

Not to say "it is what it is" but "they are where they are"

Talking about fear, my ears ring

My logic marked by passing stampedes

Motion sickness is emotional

Someone mistaken with an eating disorder keeps the weight on top

I'm like a dog waiting for its master, but I have multiple masters

Being a master is the same as dispossession

The disaster happens concurrently

To be singled-out, you must surround yourself

History is present time, but is not present

The mind is storage and shipping

In case we are separated, make sure a statue is our meeting place

When I have a plan, I beg you to stop

More often than not, space gets in the way

LAWN FURNITURE

Jody Gladding

looks out to stars

so far away

they've long stopped burning

Unfathomable Mystery!

the chair I always sit in

no emptier than the chair

I never do

LULLABY

Peter Gizzi

Everyone's listening to someone in the air
and singing knows every chestnut from way out when
the mourning dawn of living each apple and every atom
in the tooth actually small circuits uncover vast spaces
even if invisible you see the picture field and the lightning
is there a difference between a photograph of a child
and what memorials what or what is the role of art if any
within your particular emotion machine
the limits of thought and seeing perhaps
it explains water is one way to apprehend air
the morning light is in us
a stinging charge in the mouth
this is something everyone feels at least once
here before you started listening to the song

at the beach and soldiers by a desert

if anybody looked we are all stranded by the shore of something

I mean to say seeing pictures inside as they are

LULLABY

All animals like to nuzzle with their soft parts
what of it when you see the leafy conflagration in spring
a reminiscing eventual in small wistful bursts
the rhythm of sweeping
everything orbiting in this path
the daytime moon and the mourning dove
both are gray and still with us
even today what is soft and has depth is pleasant
Saturday can be like this too alone in the garage
the organic symphony encircling
the furrowed lanes of mint and clover
remember this and breathe deeply when you can

BROT UND ROSEN

Aleš Šteger

Although the January wind did not whirl it out of the past, but, still fresh from this moment's creation, out of our cerebral landscape, memory's pale cloud filled the whole afternoon. Or was it just the smell of cigars floating between the word *bread* and the word *roses* in the restaurant? And was this floating later filed away with the inscription *remembered* or with the inscription *invented*? Why waste so many words over the dryness of tobacco, unless words are found in the middle of what's lost? Only once have they managed to hide, but my interlocutor Triton stirred them to the surface again, stabbing under thin slices of carpaccio with a fork. He put down the cutlery, looked through the window leaning against my back with its poor evening light, challenging me like a duelist. He was talking about the *Friedrichshain* district where we were sitting, about the final street combat, which raged here in April of '45. Russian units were biting into the city like circular saws. The less dazzled commanders of the SS detachments ordered the rest of the soldiers, most of them under sixteen, to retreat. Retreat, as far west as possible. Better to fall into the hands of the Americans than the Russians. Only small children were safe from Russian vengeance, he said, because the Russians were exceptionally violent and melodramatic at the same time. And there was more than enough of both, violence and melodrama, in the twentieth century. The twentieth century. As I turned to measure the evening behind the window, hundreds of summers and winters were falling from the sky, white and slow like porcelain. In Dresden it shattered like the body in the body of his grandmother, who was gang raped during the invasion. Is he allowed, as a German, as the executioners' son, to write of the aggression of the victims? Is poetry an accounting, is it testimony? And if so, is it only the testimony of the victors? Is it a rhythmically captive memory? Is it a rhymed draining of ethics and ideology? Or is it a parallel world, a vent for

the acrobatics of the liberated imagination? Is a poem allowed to testify about something passed along as some story? What we have experienced only as someone else's memory? Not in the images on the retina and the vibrations of the eyes, only in the echo of babble, in the desperate whisper, the coming and going of borrowed words? And is a poem, because of the *if* it tattooed on the arm, is a poem not only for amusement? If you could become someone else for an hour, whom would you choose? Donald Rumsfeld. And Hitler? For an hour, for an hour you would. Did you know: the name of the man who cremated Adolf was Faust? And he was Jewish, of course. What did Auden say about Rilke? That he was the greatest lesbian poet after Sappho. And what did Brecht say about Rilke? That whenever he talks about god, he gets a foggy look on his face. And outside it was snowing. And outside it was snowing. Poetry is like a cocoon, said my interlocutor, and lit another cigar. Now it has shut again. It's been like this for three thousand years. The shifting movement between phases, when it is a princess and when it is an orphan. Now we are in the waiting phase again. A hundred years ago in Switzerland, Nietzsche, too, gave a lecture to four students, two of whom were homeless, escaping to the lecture room because of the harsh winter. This is why it does not hurt that a collection of verses does not raise interest like a novel does. That poetry is currently not in the condition to undermine the system. That it does not yield as much financially, that smarts, he added. Or did I add it myself? My memory is slowly deserting me. I remember I ordered whiskey and wine once again and said that poetry furthermore was sometimes a cocoon and sometimes a butterfly, also at times Maya the bee, at times the computer game of a daydreamer, at times a mass grave. I don't know where Odysseus, Saint Paul and Schopenhauer, the last a little less holy, edged into our conversation from. At midnight we were separated by religion, ahead of which I had emigrated and to which he had made a pilgrimage. Meanwhile outside it was snowing. As we said goodbye, it already had covered all the folds and falls. The traces of shrapnel and grenades were not recognizable. Everywhere only the white softness, into which night

was soundlessly falling. I stopped by a certain tavern and ordered another for across. Then I trudged through the snow with heavy tread towards the empty *Alexanderplatz*. When I looked back, there was not even a thread of my path behind me.

—from *Berlin* (Beletrina, 2007).

Translated from the Slovenian by Brian Henry.

[Notes: *Brot und Rosen* is the name of a restaurant in Berlin. The German poet Durs Grünbein has written a book called *Porcelain*, which conjures "pour Celan." Grünbein also has published the book *Falten und Fallen*, or *Folds and Falls*.]

PARKING

Timothy Liu

You took it
as a sign

the moment

he pulled
right up

to your door

with parking
violations

tucked beneath

his wipers,
the engine

left running—

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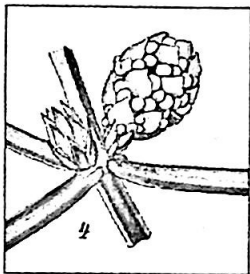
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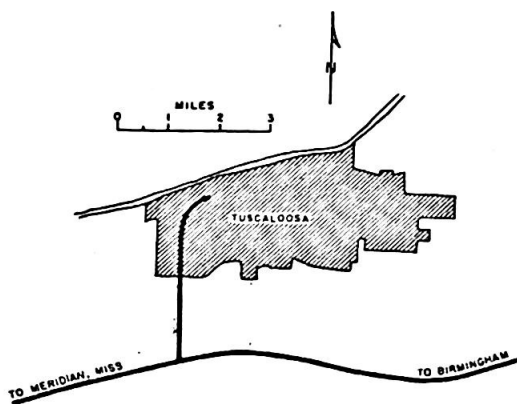
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november 20, 2011
flying object

name the moon's phases or
it's favorite vacation destination.
go.

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1. wailing gibbous

Let me not mar that perfect dream
with an auroral stain
but so adjust my daily naps
that it may come again

center for

independent

3. Pigeon Forge

in the better sea, half
blanket under its wings.
A small black poodle.

publishing

for one must wait
to shut the others, as

desire most into itself
a soul condemned to be
attended by a single hound
its own identity

4. there are no more tea cups
for our saucers, they said
wiping their sweat with their great

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55. An Unfortunate Chapter In Your

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